



**Save the Children**

*Rewrite the Future*

## *where peace Begins*

Supporting statements in the debate on peace and education

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## International Labour Organization (ILO)

In the words of the ILO's motto "Si vis pacem, cole justitiam" - "If you desire peace, cultivate justice." Clearly, a world in which children are deprived of education is a world without social justice. Giving children the opportunity to learn, write and rewrite their future with a leitmotif of peace calls for broad-based action - for the seeds of peace to grow in the minds of children, many hands have to plant, water and nurture them.

Illiteracy and lack of basic education are key factors of social exclusion. Quality education for all children, girls and boys, is a fundamental right. Ensuring that this right becomes a reality demands action across sectoral boundaries. Of central importance is a well-functioning education system with qualified and motivated teachers. And sustainable solutions require parents to have jobs and benefits from social protection systems that enable them to keep children in school. Moreover, the social and economic environment must sustain the legitimate belief of parents and children that education will open the way to a better life and a good job in the future.

Today, more than 70 million children are not in primary school, not to speak of the fact that less than half of the world's children are in secondary school. The technology of education is well-known and we have agreed on the goals. The responsibility is there to grasp. We need to unleash the will, look at the challenge through new lenses and find more comprehensive ways of working to meet the goals.

The ILO brings its work-centred mission to the challenge of achieving the goal of education for all. Its history and tripartite structure comprising governments, employers' and workers' representatives, reflect the pivotal role of work at the intersection of people's lives, the productive system and society. Women and men everywhere want the dignity of work; of being able to support themselves and their families, not least to give a good education to their children. They want access to health care, some protection when they cannot find work or are not able to work. They want to enjoy rights at work and to have their voices heard. These aspirations are embodied in the ILO's goal of decent work.

The Organization was set up following the First World War to tackle the appalling conditions of labour that threatened "to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled." In the upheaval following the Second World War, the ILO translated its normative instruments into policies and programmes to promote social stability and to ease the traumas of poverty and unemployment. At the same time it was called upon to focus on how other policies affect the right of all human beings "to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity", a right that is distilled in the concept of decent work.

Decent work is the key route out of poverty, central to human security, and a fundamental component of the social infrastructure of peace. Policies for decent job creation and enterprise development – including at the early stages after conflicts and crises – pave the way to the stability that children and families need. It is the necessary foundation for rebuilding the lives

of people, communities, societies and economies shattered by conflict and crisis. As part of the productive system, decisions on job creation are integral to policies and strategies for economic growth. And the expansion of productive jobs restores and sustains hope in the future.

The goal of education for all hinges importantly on respect for fundamental principles and rights at work – in particular, the eradication of child labour. The ILO estimates that, in 2004, there were some 218 million child labourers with 126 million of these in hazardous forms of work. Out of school children are vulnerable to child labour often in its worst forms and the girl child is the loser when families have to choose between sending a boy or a girl to school. In times of conflict, children are vulnerable to being drawn in as child soldiers.

How will this change? It requires awareness and acknowledgement of the problem. Legislation. Strong labour administration and labour inspection systems. Quality education and relevant education. Accessible schools. Parents having decent work and incomes. Support systems to help them in difficult circumstances. With concerted action we are seeing that change is possible - the number of child labourers globally fell by 11 per cent between 2000 and 2004. A positive signal is the ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No 182) by 167 countries and it is the most rapidly ratified ILO Convention. The ILO Minimum Age Convention (No 138) has now been ratified by 149 countries. Of course much more needs to be done.

One major challenge to meeting the goal of Education for All is the severe shortage of qualified teachers. Addressing this will depend on a number of factors including the quality of teacher training, working and living conditions of teachers, and opportunities for career development. The ILO and UNESCO have collaborated to produce a Recommendation on the Status of Teachers which provides a reference point for forward-looking national policies and practices to create a professional teaching force for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Change in policy direction, in ways of working and in the allocation of resources requires courage and leadership to make the decisions that can transform old ways and priorities. But experience tells us that organization and voice are also key to driving such change and translating what ought to be done into what is done. It calls for pressure for change together with mechanisms to take mobilization forward and shape realistic responses appropriate to national and local circumstances. The trade union movement, the cooperative movement and other civil society organizations are indispensable in pressing for social justice and shifting the balance towards policies that work for all.

A culture of peace is a culture of dialogue. Dialogue where different interests are represented is a powerful tool in going from exhortation to acquiescence and action. Policy dialogues can open spaces for greater policy coherence. The participation of employers' organizations and business side by side with governments and with workers' organizations – what in the ILO is captured in the concept of social dialogue - can help to shape education and training systems that are relevant and responsive to work place needs and consequently the job prospects of young people.

Doing things differently means making the connections that will end fragmented and inconsistent approaches to social and economic objectives. Quality education for all girls and boys, decent work for women and men and social justice for all, demand integrated approaches to the integrated nature of people's experience. It is the responsibility of adults - at many different levels - to create the conditions that will enable children to rewrite their future through education. The policies and action of local authorities, national governments, regional

organizations, development cooperation agencies, the multilateral system must be mutually reinforcing and work in the same direction. The ILO is committed to working with others in the quest for such coherence and to putting decent work – rights, jobs, protection and dialogue - at the service of quality education for all children.



**Juan Somavia, Director- General**

**International Labour Organization (ILO)**  
**Winner of Nobel Peace Prize, 1969**



## **International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)**

The written history of childhood is a very short part of the history of humankind. We know for sure that children have been part of the labour force everywhere. They have worked in fields and in factories. They have worked hard in taking care of their siblings or taking care of the cattle from the earliest years on, as many of them still do nowadays in the developing world.

Children have always been, as a part of any human society, influenced by famines, illnesses, conflicts and occupations, witnessing firsthand human violence and participating in many ways in crises and warfare. The fact is, that under warlike conditions children are exposed to crude, violent, fearful and shocking experiences. They have been forced to become soldiers or have been used as first trespassers in mine fields. In modern warfare, the civilian and the combatants are often mixed. Children may grow up in regions, where hostilities are deeply rooted in the minds of the civilian population, and aggressive behaviour is supported. Children are often living in circumstances of low intensity warfare, where the adversaries tend to destroy the structures of the targeted country despite the absence of open aggression. The children of affluent industrialised and information societies face warfare as a sophisticated play where their skills are developed to destroy the enemy image. In countries not exposed to conflict or warfare, this militarisation of children's minds does not aim at the potential military use of children, but rather at the construction of legitimacy for warfare and arms race. The education for war has long traditions, compared to the traditions of peace education.

Peace education has been on the agenda of IPPNW from the very beginning of our activities. We have organised peace courses and schools, trained medical students and teachers. There is an evident need in the whole world to increase both the effort given, as well as the level of ambition regarding, the results of the peace education. These facilities are, however, not enough; there is still a challenging field ahead of us, calling for the input of the best research resources and the real interest of the societies as a whole.

We have to develop new methods for working for peace education, and new sense of responsibility for all adults. Children's minds are easily occupied by strong, charismatic adults. Children's minds are a mirror of our own society. Focusing only on children in peace education is merely a gesture of our own powerlessness and unwillingness to change our global beliefs. This means developing new ways to cooperate with societies, teachers, adults and parents. The parents will be our partners in developing peace education.

And last but not least: we have to develop methods and ways of working more with children, to speak directly to children and to listen to children. Children cannot bear responsibility for their development or for the development of the world, but they will need to have a say in our future.

**Professor Vappu Taipale, MD**

**Co-President of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War  
(IPPNW)**

**Winner of Nobel Peace Prize, 1985**

**Bard Vegar Solhjell**

**Norwegian Minister of Education**

Thank you for the letter from Save the Children dated 25<sup>th</sup> April this year with questions about participating in the organisation's internet debate about education for children in war and crisis.

This is an important debate which I would like to contribute. Here is my input:

“Good education is a necessary building block for long-term peace. In war or emergencies education can be the one moment which reminds children and youth about a peaceful and organised life. Through education they will receive a tool enabling them to participate in shaping a society where peaceful interaction is possible. It would therefore be desirable that education were referred to in all peace agreements.

We know today that it is possible, although difficult, to provide children and youth with a good education also in extreme situations. All countries which have given their support to the global goals on Education For All (EFA) should stress to make the six EFA-goals applicable also for fragile states. Donor countries have a particular duty towards fragile states. And time is short: For every generation of children and youth which does not receive education, their home country loses their most important resource.

For those who shall contribute to good schools in fragile states, there is a main challenge to converge about something more than own interests. Even in a fairly well equipped country like Norway, there was in 1945 crucial that both central and local authorities, teachers and parents were able to find temporary compromises and at the same time look ahead. Not least, it was important that education personnel accepted solutions that made it possible for us to get teachers in the classroom. School buildings and equipment are important, but for the students, and for the quality of the education, teachers are the most important element.

In December 2008 Norway will be hosting the high level meeting on Education for All. In connection to this we will work to achieve new obligations and initiatives to ensure enough teachers in the classrooms in those countries that are furthest away from reaching the goal on education for all.

To this meeting we need ideas and creative actions to come to grips with the lack of teachers. I challenge the participants in this debate to contribute with such ideas.”

## Helga Hjetland

### President of Union of Education Norway and Board Member of GCE

All children in this world, children in war and children in peace, need education. The domestic debate in newspapers this summer about schools and education has gone in different directions, among others if we need the school or not (*Dagbladet*<sup>1</sup>: Kristin Clemet and Nils Christie). This debate becomes very strange and provincial in light of knowing that almost 40 million children in the world is prevented from access to schools because of war and conflict, and that equally many children are held back from school because of poor economy and lack of political capacity and will.

Therefore, all honour to the Save the Children Alliance who this spring launched the global debate about education and peace and for the *Rewrite the Future* project. You will have to search for a more important theme. As a child, as a grown up, as a teacher, as a manager of school and trade union leader I have never been in doubt that schools and education is an important and necessary part of the life of human beings. Neither in our international cooperation nor as member of the world's teacher union, Education International, I am not in doubt that education is also work for peace. We need an upbringing for all children that is something else than learning at home and in the workplace. A formal training which can build the ground to form own lives and build a society where dialogue, democracy and human rights are allowed to prevail – and thereby find other ways out than war and conflict between people and states.

To learn the school subjects are only part of the training. Learning to read and calculate, obtain new knowledge and meet people with a different point of view and opinions and discuss these jointly, give perspectives and overview and can develop broader views and tolerance. If one are to win over prejudices and petty-minded behaviour, raise as an individual and as society, one have to look beyond own and others borders and not let one self be locked in by high social and cultural fences.

Not least children in war and conflict-affected areas need to experience something in life that is fairly normal. They need to learn something new and be allowed to use their urge to research and create. They can not wait. School attendance need to happen there and then while they are children and youth. As children they have to be given the basis to develop their confidence and independence and made aware about own and others situation. The seed to peace and reconciliation – but also to conflict and strife – can be put in the child's mind. We adults therefore need to ensure that all children receive a good school to attend. Knowledge and reflection is the bulwark against poverty, diseases, exploitation and abuse of power. Children who are rejected from school often have problems making claims within family and society. The result in conflict affected parts of the world is lasting poverty and strife and poorly paid or unpaid work, struggle and poverty for the rest of the life.

Dissension is about power and distribution. Rich countries have control over the greater part of the world's resources. Therefore a great responsibility rests with us. The Millennium Development Goals for improvement of poor countries is a step in the right direction, but we see that from area to area and from year to year that the goals are not followed by action and financial support which makes it possible to achieve by 2015. The goals about education for all

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<sup>1</sup> SCN comment: one of the bigger daily newspapers in Norway

are no exception. There is six to seven years left, and not even Norway is an initiator as we should be.

It takes time to develop good education, not least because there is a huge lack of qualified teachers in countries and areas in the south. UNESCO has concluded that there is a lack of 18 million teachers. International economical politics also make barriers for governments in several poor countries to use public funds to provide good education for it's children and youth. In order to keep down the costs on public expenditures we see that in several places use of cheaper, unskilled workers is not unusual, even if there are qualified teachers.

The impact of education is well documented. Good education is good development. Education for all is good equality-politics. To improve the quality by using qualified teachers and educate more teachers is work that has to be intensified. This is politics that our government can emphasise and arrange for at the high level meeting in Norway in December 2008. We have to expect that our government is a driving force for education to become high on the agenda and be given priority in the international cooperation.

To provide schools and education to the children of the world is both short term and long term peace-promoting work. It can give children and adults freedom from poverty, disease, oppression and abuse of power. All the children in countries in the south that wish to go to school – often their first wish – and who are not allowed to, have a clear picture of education being important for their future and their society.

## **Professor Elie Wiesel**

For children everywhere, all over the planet, this century which has barely begun is, more than any other century before it, already full of more suffering than hope.

For generations, adults have made war as children were sucked into the black hole of History, dragged down by famine, disease, and violence based on religious, ethnic or national differences.

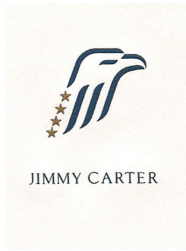
Hasn't the moment come to put an end to this?

The twenty-first century, for children neglected, abandoned, humiliated and sacrificed, should bring safety and joy for humankind and the future.

As always, achieving this will depend not only on children but on us, on our generous and enthusiastic support, so their future becomes one full of love, of life and of warmth.

And of peace – the greatest of victories.

**Elie Wiesel**  
**Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 1986**



## President Jimmy Carter

Having now completed twenty-six years as an Emory University professor, I have seen the beneficial impact of education in promoting peace.

Each year my schedule includes sessions with students from about a hundred different nations, during which we have unrestricted discussions. I find that one of their primary goals is to understand each other better and to derive lessons from past history on how to avoid making the same mistakes that have in the past let to conflict.

As a parent and grandparent, I know that this process of exploring the peaceful resolution of differences can and should begin quite early in a child's life, both within the home and the classroom. It would be a mistake to underestimate the influence that children can have in shaping the opinions and decisions of adults.

I have no doubt that, almost without exception, the wars that have afflicted the world society have been unnecessary.

A better understanding of each other and a willingness to accommodate inevitable differences through direct communication or mediation can almost always lead to peace. Our children, with their inherent innocence and idealism, can be a driving force in seeking this goal.

Sincerely,

**Jimmy Carter**  
**Winner of Nobel Peace Prize, 2002**

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

### **The United Nations**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 60th anniversary of which is being commemorated this year, enshrines education as a fundamental right for all people. Education is a virtue for many reasons, and is the very basis of human progress. It is also among the most powerful tools we have for building sturdy foundations of peace.

In troubled societies, education can assuage the tensions that might emanate from injustice, inequality, exploitation or discrimination. When conflict rages, the establishment of "safe learning spaces" for children, respected by combatants as "off limits", can help to maintain some sense of normalcy. And once the guns fall silent, education - including through the use of "truth and reconciliation" processes - can help societies address the underlying causes that gave rise to conflict in the first place.

Too many children around the world continue to be exposed to violence and upheaval. In 2007, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) responded to more than 200 emergencies: more than half were caused by natural disasters; nearly one quarter involved outbreaks of cholera and other infectious diseases; and almost all the rest stemmed from armed conflict, food insecurity and displacements of people. Again and again the world witnessed the terrible toll: countless tragic deaths, reversals of hard-won development gains, damage to property and institutions, and ultimately, among all too many, loss of hope for the future.

Conflict is not inevitable; emergencies can be averted or contained. But this is challenging work, and we must not be daunted. I commend the invaluable efforts of UN partners such as Save the Children, and welcome efforts to "rewrite the future" and ensure that children and youth throughout the world receive the quality education that is their birthright.

**BAN Ki-moon**  
**Secretary General**

**United Nations**  
**Winner of Nobel Peace Prize, 2001**



## The International Peace Bureau

The International Peace Bureau congratulates Save the Children on the important peace education initiative: *'Rewrite the future!'*

When compared with the resources used for prestigious military academies, only ridiculously small amounts are being allocated and used around the world for peace education. We therefore hope that this initiative will contribute to creating, or strengthening, the much needed political will to reform educational systems – and thereby help bring forward necessary funding, both to allow the almost 100 million out-of-school children to attend school, and provide literacy to the 700+ million young and adult illiterates, mostly girls and women. Furthermore, the education provided must be relevant and of high quality – and should teach students the skills of non-violent conflict resolution and help them develop a vision for a just and peaceful world, a world without war, a world where war has in fact become obsolete. Denying people access to knowledge and a fair share of the world's income is a great danger to world peace and prosperity. The world both needs and deserves literate women and men who can critically and constructively participate in shaping our common future. It is important that the school system helps young people reflect on what kind of future they would like to see – and what it takes to reach the desired situation.

There may be many ways of defining peace education, and didactical approaches may vary in different contexts and in different age groups. We already have important normative instruments to guide our work, including the 1974 recommendation and the 1995 declaration of UNESCO on this subject. The definition agreed and the commitment made by the world's Ministers of Education when they met at UNESCO in 1994 are most appropriate and useful. They pledged *"to pay special attention to improving curricula, the content of textbooks, and other educational materials including new technology, with a view to educating caring and responsible citizens, open to other cultures, able to appreciate the value of freedom, respectful of human dignity and differences, and able to prevent conflicts or resolve them by non-violent means"*.

The Ministers of Education also underlined on this occasion their intention *"to take suitable steps to establish in educational institutions an atmosphere contributing to the success of education for international understanding, so that they become ideal places for the exercise of tolerance, respect for human rights, the practice of democracy and learning about the wealth of cultural identities"*.

In the report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (*Learning: the treasure within*, UNESCO 1996) four pillars of education are outlined: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together, with the greatest emphasis on the challenge of learning to live peacefully together. Learning to live together may be seen as a "second literacy", as indispensable to building a culture of peace as literacy itself.

In the *UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace* (UNGA, September 1999), which guides the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), peace education is the first of eight pillars considered

essential for the process of moving from a culture of war and violence towards a culture of peace.

Much is already under way: the ongoing World Programme on Human Rights Education; the UN Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education; and a series of civil society and academic initiatives, such as the Global Campaign for Peace Education (a follow-up to the Hague Appeal for Peace, 1999); and the International Institute for Peace Education which each year trains many teachers and teacher trainers around the world -- all contribute to reaching students with an understanding of the preciousness of peace and the preciousness and beauty of our planet. With Leonardo da Vinci, we should remind each other that *"we are all in the same boat, in peril of sinking"* and that solidarity and international understanding are primordial for the very survival of the planet and its inhabitants.

In order to help educate responsible and caring citizens, we need to strengthen our ability to co-operate and to draw synergy and effectiveness from the different experiences made in peace education. Everyone has a role to play in meeting this challenge.

**Ingeborg Breines**  
**Vice-President**

**The International Peace Bureau**  
**Winner of Nobel Peace Prize, 1910**

## Mairead Maguire

'Education, education, education,' these were the words which the children, in a Nairobi primary school, sang to me as I visited their classroom over a year ago. In this school, dedicated teachers struggled under tremendous odds to give the children a good education. I was informed by the Principal that most of the teachers do not receive a salary and volunteer their time. The school has very little money to provide salaries and basic educational materials. Many of the children's parents are sick, or have died from aids, and the problem of violence (particularly against children and women) is rife.

This story can be multiplied not only right across the African Continent, but in many developing, and allegedly developed, countries in the world. In a primary school in Philadelphia, USA, a few years ago, I was told by the Principal, they did not have enough funds to buy pencils for the children, (and this in one of the richest countries in the world).

By failing to put health care and education top of their Policy agendas, Governments, in many countries are failing their citizens, particularly their children.

There are exceptions where some countries have more wisdom and put their precious tax money into education, health care, good infrastructure, and technological advances. A visit to Japan, Germany, and some other countries is proof that when a country focuses on the human security of its people, by meeting their basic human needs, and not wasting their money on militarism, great advances can be made.

However, in too many countries Education and Health Care come well down the list of Government Policies. The lions share of Government funding goes into Defence Budgets. In most every country just a fraction of what is spent on militarism, could fund education, health care, and meet the entire programme of the Millennium development goals. So why are we not doing this?

Our most precious treasure, in any society, is our children. (And, I believe, in an interconnected, interdependent world, where poverty and disease is destroying the lives of children, we can all do something to help stop this injustice). A country should be judged on how it treats its children, and the most vulnerable of its citizens, i.e. The elderly, the sick and the poor. Providing free health care and free education is a moral duty of the State, and there is enough money in Government purses to do it, but what is needed is a readjustment of our political priorities, redistribution of wealth, and to create the political will to do this.

Education is a basic human right for all. It is a great gift to be able to read, to write, to have the joy of gaining knowledge and being able to use our creativity and imagination in enriching our own lives and the lives of others. The old adage 'education is easy carried' is so true. It gives one a sense of dignity, of feeling in control of one's own life. Lack of education can lead to frustration, anger, violence, and sense of alienation and a society is storing up problems for the future, when its citizens feel that their right to a good education, and subsequently, being able to obtain employment and fulfilment, is beyond their reach. Many children and adults have learning difficulties, and are not receiving the extra help needed to overcome these difficulties. However, tribute must be paid to the educationalists, health professionals, etc., who have come a long way in developing ways in which help can be given in many areas. What is needed is funding to help in these many and excellent developmental programmes to enrich children's, and adults, lives.

In this the UN Decade for a Culture of peace and Nonviolence, (2001-2010) teaching peace, Nonviolence, and conflict resolution at every level of society, and particularly in our educational systems, is urgent if we are to create non-killing, non-violent societies and world. This new nonviolent culture is possible but we can only do it with a serious commitment to peace education for all the children of the world.

Reaching out also in a new way also to help countries in conflict is important. An Afghani Women leader recently said that it would be more helpful to her country if the West helped build schools instead of sending armies and more guns. Sometimes we have to listen closer to how best we can help others, and be courageous enough to admit that the old ways of militarism and war, have now got to be replaced with new policies and approaches.

When the children of Kenya, sing 'Education, education, education', let's see what Governments and individuals, can do as the Global human family, to join in solidarity and support those on the ground in their own country make their children's' dream come true. In 10 years time, with imagination and determination we could provide education for the worlds 72 million out-of-school children. Perhaps the UN Security Council members, who are all nuclear weapons states, could agree to abolish their nuclear weapons programmes and put the money into children's' education. This would provide hope for human security, and leadership from the UN and world governments, to the children of the world.

**Mairead Maguire**  
**Winner of Nobel Peace Prize, 1976**



## United Nations Children's Fund

Around the world, children deserve the opportunity to learn and develop to their full potential. Education is most at risk in countries in conflict or emerging from conflict. The majority of the more than 93 million children of primary-school age who are out of school, live in these countries.

Providing quality education is among the best ways to mitigate the impact of emergencies on children and to lay a solid foundation for peace and sustainable development.

In post-conflict situations, getting children back to school as quickly as possible can make an important contribution to recovery processes and help bring stability to their lives.

Education provides children with the tools they need to build constructive, positive futures. Schools serve as meeting points where children can receive essential health care and nutrition, along with protection and life-saving information.

In countries that are emerging from conflict, education can also be a force for social transformation, rallying previously warring parties around the issue of safeguarding the rights and well-being of children, to build a better future.

**Ann M. Veneman**  
**Executive Director**

**United Nations Children's Fund**  
**Winner of Nobel Peace Prize, 1965**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



Violence is too often a pervasive part of girls' lives. They experience violence in the home, in the community, in the context of armed conflict, and at the hands of state actors, with devastating consequences.

Schools are no exception. Schools are a microcosm of society and reflect societal prejudices. Where violence against women and girls occurs in society as a whole, it is reflected in the school setting, particularly if teachers reinforce rather than combat societal prejudices. As a result, girls may suffer sexual abuse and other violent acts in school at the hands of their classmates, their teachers, administrators, custodians and guards, and other staff.

Violence at the hands of peers is the extreme end on a continuum of behaviour that often begins with verbal threats, threatening gestures, or denigration of an individual student or of particular groups of students. It is often the consequence of failing to challenge less severe abuses.

When violence is perpetrated by teachers or other adults, their behaviour is the extreme end of another continuum, that of abuse of power. Teachers and other school officials wield immense power over the lives of their students. That power is enhanced when teachers have even more power to coerce or intimidate their students—for instance, the ability to administer corporal punishment or a mandate to levy school fees.

Armed conflict increases the risk of violence for both girls and boys. For one thing, schools may be targets for violence during armed conflict. The targeting of schools is particularly common where children are recruited for use in the conflict. Targeting of schools may also occur where education is politicized. In such contexts, the violence suffered by girls is often not the same as that inflicted on boys—girls may be forcibly recruited in order to provide sexual services to combatants while boys are captured to serve as soldiers; girls may be raped while boys are maimed as a means of subduing civilians thought to be supporting the enemy.

In addition, the insecurity associated with armed conflict may keep parents from sending their children to schools and make it very difficult for school officials to protect children in a school environment. And at times teachers and in some cases students are themselves the targets in a conflict.

Education is a human right, reaffirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and binding regional and international treaties. It is also a means of combating violence, including that caused by armed conflict. Among the aims of education are the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and children's preparation for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples.

These aims will not be realised without political will, but human rights are not optional. There can be no excuses, no exceptions, and no delays.

**Amnesty International**  
**Winner of Nobel Peace Prize, 1975**



## **Kim Dae-jung**

We are all aware of how horrible a war is to children. Wars, in all ages and countries and regardless of their scale, have deprived children of their lives or their parents. Unfortunately, this tragedy is not ceased in this civilised world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Wars and terrorism are still rampant, threatening the lives and safety of children and the situation is getting serious affected by poverty, food shortage and environmental disasters. Children in many places including Africa and Asia suffer from starvation, diseases and absence of places to sleep.

First and foremost children should be protected for their safety and peaceful livelihood even in dangerous and unstable circumstances. And they must be fed well, sleep soundly, and be cured if they become ill. Furthermore they should be given opportunities to receive proper education. These are the ways that human being living in a civilized society leads its life.

I sincerely hope that the 'Rewrite the Future' campaign is successful with active interest and participation. May heaven bless Save the Children and all others who work hard for safety and peace of children.

**Kim Dae-jung**  
**Winner of Nobel Peace Prize, 2000**

## Adolfo Pérez Esquivel

Vivimos un mundo con grandes dificultades y conflictos, la globalización y la concentración del poder en pocas manos y la exclusión de las dos terceras partes de la humanidad. Los contrastes de luces y sombras son cada vez más fuertes en la aceleración del tiempo, que no corresponden a los tiempos del equilibrio del ser humano con la madre naturaleza.

Por otra parte debemos reconocer que nos ha tocado vivir una época interesante, con desafíos y posibilidades diversas, en la creatividad y la búsqueda permanente de la libertad, que se forja en la conciencia crítica y en valores de la diversidad cultural de los pueblos; en la capacidad de encontrar caminos, en la educación que amplía esa conciencia crítica y desde dónde podemos crecer y desarrollarnos como personas y pueblos.

Paulo Freire, de Brasil, que tanto aportó a la formación educativa en toda América Latina, afirmaba que la educación liberadora es la práctica de la libertad, de la conciencia y valores, entre el educador y el educando, una interrelación conjunta que permite ejercer sus derechos.

Cuando se plantean los caminos educativos y sus propuestas, generalmente se diferencia lo que se denomina "educación formal", oficial, sistemática, de acuerdo a métodos impuestos que muchas veces condiciona a los educadores y educandos a la aplicación de instrumentos pedagógicos dirigidos burocráticamente. Condicionan el aprendizaje rigiéndolo con métodos autoritarios y poco comunicativos para el aprendizaje, si no existe en los docentes la fuerza creadora de liberar la palabra y el conocimiento.

Por otra parte se habla de otras metodologías educativas, lo que se denomina "educación popular", o "educación no formal o alternativa" que tratan de llegar a sectores sociales diversos. No sólo al aprendizaje de niños y jóvenes, sino a sectores populares que encuentran en ese aprendizaje la formación y conciencia apropiada para sus vidas y sectores sociales.

Es necesario asumir el desafío de aportar para comprender los caminos de la Educación Popular y los Derechos Humanos y tratar de compartir, acompañar en el caminar de las estaciones del viaje, que cuestionan e interpelan. Y se pueden plantear caminos a seguir. Partir de la experiencia y evaluación con sectores populares e invitar a sumarse en el viaje de la educación. La educación popular es un camino de construcción de derechos. El derecho a saber y el derecho a decir, el derecho a la palabra.

Éste es el punto de partida, liberar la palabra liberando el pensamiento, darle contenido a la energía que vive en la palabra. El primer paso de liberación, que se manifiesta en la memoria, la identidad y pertenencia de cada persona y del pueblo.

Siempre señalé que la enseñanza y práctica de los derechos humanos debieran estar incluidos en todas las curriculas educativas, en las diversas disciplinas y niveles educativos desde las escuelas de niños, hasta los niveles medios y superiores. Lo que ayudaría a superar la cultura de la violencia impuesta en nuestras sociedades.

Abordar el desafío educativo sobre los derechos humanos y las prácticas a partir de las experiencias personales y grupales, es generar nuevos paradigmas y valores en nuestras sociedades. Para ello es necesaria la memoria, que nos ayuda a iluminar el presente y comprender nuestras posibilidades, miedos, dudas y tratar de buscar en las distintas estaciones de la vida nuestro rumbo y compartirlo en la solidaridad y la esperanza.

En ese caminar de la memoria, la historia y vida del pueblo se nos manifiesta en su dolor, angustias y esperanzas. Los pueblos de América Latina vivieron el horror de las dictaduras militares, los asesinatos, secuestros, desaparición de personas, apropiación de niños, cárceles, torturas, exilio.

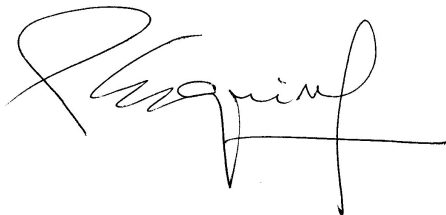
Vivieron la capacidad de la resistencia, en su lucha por la dignidad humana, la libertad y por restablecer el Estado de Derecho, y a la vez con fuertes contrastes nacidos del exilio de las conciencias y de ese fatídico "no te metas". El miedo lleva a la parálisis y a perder lo fundamental de todo ser humano: la capacidad de "ser persona", el primer y más valioso sentido de la libertad.

No podemos tener memoria sin identidad y valores, sin las huellas de quienes nos precedieron y de aquellos que, "escarbando" palabras, hurgando en la memoria, buscan recuperar la identidad, los valores y dignidad.

La vida nos enfrenta con la pertenencia e identidad de un pueblo. Los jóvenes bucean en la memoria y reclaman el derecho a la Verdad y la Justicia, quieren y necesitan saber el rol y los roles que la sociedad y sus protagonistas asumieron. ¿Por qué?- ¿Qué pasó?

A pesar de todo, aunque quisieron matar la memoria, la vida e identidad de los pueblos, no lo lograron. El camino tiene sus estaciones, el tren de la vida continúa, los desafíos se suceden y la esperanza es ese horizonte que se aleja y que buscamos incesantemente. La educación tiene un papel preponderante para erradicar la violencia, para llegar a una cultura de la paz.

Las utopías, si no existen, tenemos que tener la capacidad de inventarlas. La educación Popular y los Derechos Humanos son caminos a construir esas utopías.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adolfo Pérez Esquivel'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Adolfo Pérez Esquivel**  
**Winner of Nobel Peace Prize, 1980**

We in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), with our community base in virtually every country in the world, strongly support the vision at the base of this open letter. Peace does indeed begin in the minds of children.

Our Constitution, and the strategies we have in place, all emphasise the role of our National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in building safe communities. We recognise that this has special implications at the community level and for volunteers, and that children and youth must be built into the function through involvement in the design, implementation and evaluation of all programs.

This has been stressed by our National Societies at all levels, including at our International Federation's General Assembly in November 2007. It has also featured in our presentations to the United Nations and other international bodies and in coordinated advocacy with partner organisations sharing the same ideals and goals.

Strategic framework on peace:

The mission of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity.

We are also committed, through our Global Agenda, to support the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Goal 2, which aims to achieve universal primary education for all boys and girls by 2015, is not a goal with which the IFRC is directly involved, but it is supported by our active involvement in the pursuit of other goals which cannot be achieved without such basics as literacy, numeracy and gender equality.

Goals 4 and 5, on child mortality and maternal health, are much more directly related to the work of our National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Other goals related to development, including of course Goal 1 on poverty reduction, are equally relevant to us.

I mention these points because our view is that while Peace begins in the minds of children, the minds of children will also be formed within a wider environment and it is the task of all organisations to work together to build environments in which children can make a contribution which is real.

That is why we so readily understand the plea for help for children in communities affected by armed conflict. Natural disaster settings are as damaging to a child's education prospects and so are situations where communities are deprived of teachers, schools and other education necessities by diseases like HIV.

Our Red Cross Crescent is committed to achieving its results within a framework set by seven Fundamental Principles – humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

Building respect for humanity as an essential condition for peace in communities and between nations has been at the centre of Red Cross and Red Crescent hearts since the earliest days of our Movement nearly 150 years ago.

The IFRC itself was founded in 1919 to allow Red Cross Societies to strengthen their capacity individually and jointly to address humanitarian needs in the multilateral world formed in the aftermath of the First World War.

Since that time, the Movement has grown and flourished, and it has never deviated from its humanitarian goals and aspiration to contribute to the maintenance and promotion of peace in the world.

In 1986, for instance, the year styled by the United Nations as the International Year of Peace, the 25<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent which brings together all RCRC National Societies, States parties to the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC and the IFRC, clearly subscribed to the vision of peace, as previously defined by the Federation's Commission on peace.

The Conference made it clear that the Red Cross Red Crescent sees peace as much more than the absence of war: it is *"...a dynamic process of co-operation among all States and peoples; co-operation founded on respect for freedom, independence, national sovereignty, equality, human rights, as well as on a fair and equitable distribution of resources to meet the needs of peoples."*

The Conference saw the work of the Red Cross Red Crescent actively promoting lasting peace in this sense through its humanitarian work and the dissemination of its ideals.

This conceptual underpinning has stayed with the IFRC ever since. Its current strategy notes that peace is one of the key humanitarian values which all National Societies and the IFRC are committed to promote. That promotion is not simply cognitive – or to increase knowledge and understanding – but also to influence behavioural change in the community by being the living example.

This was followed by a Pledge made by the IFRC in 2003 on non-discrimination and respect for diversity. That Pledge, which was delivered to all governments and National Societies at the 28<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, highlighted the importance of youth in peer education and non-formal education to promote international friendship and understanding.

Many National Societies have made this point a key ingredient in their own national and regional Youth assemblies.

The point has been continually refined and kept up to date. For example, in 2007 at the 30<sup>th</sup> International Conference, the 'Together for Humanity' declaration to which I have already referred spoke forcefully of the importance to intensify efforts to mobilise community respect for diversity and action against racism, discrimination, xenophobia, marginalization and other forms of exclusion. It rightly underlined Youth as directly vulnerable targets of these societal scourges, but equally reemphasised the key role of Youth as agents of behavioural change. Hence, its firm call to empower Youth to do so.

Young volunteers and staff members are vital parts of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies operating worldwide.

The IFRC believes that it is trite to describe young people as the “the future” without also acknowledging that they are the present. Young people have as much to bring to the table as adults do – if not more. As I have said, we all need to ensure that they have a meaningful and active say in decision-making processes and can contribute directly to Red Cross Red Crescent programmes and policies.

One way of addressing this need is to ensure that Youth are directly represented in governance and management where these decisions are taken. The IFRC amended its own Constitution recently to ensure that there would always be a representative of our Youth commission officially sitting in our Governing Board.

Red Cross Red Crescent focuses on youth, and in particular their empowerment, leadership and innovation. We recognise that this will require mindset and attitudinal change in some communities, and are currently developing a training module that will empower youth to take action in their community and influence behavioural change.

This module focuses on key behavioural qualities or skills, such as empathy, consensus building, non-violent problem solving, which will enable the Red Cross Red Crescent, through its youth volunteers and staff, to directly assume an educational role and build a global culture of non-violence where diversity is not only respected, but truly valued.

This is a manifestation of our determination to ensure that a slogan like that which we are all supporting is given active life and meaning everywhere in the world. In this increasingly uncertain world, and in the face of challenges such as urban violence, migration, increasing xenophobia and rising extremism, it is imperative that we harness young people’s enthusiasm and passion for change.

So we believe, as Save the Children does, that only through education – formal, non-formal and informal – can we equip young people with the insight they will need to understand and critically analyse the world, and become a truly formidable force for change within it. Our RCRC National Societies take up this challenge in every corner of the world, at any time of the day.

We need to learn more from each other as we work towards this common objective. With that in mind, let me conclude by sharing some examples of what we do in different parts of the world.

- The Danish Red Cross runs a successful school service which focuses on raising 10 to 12 year old pupils’ awareness on humanitarian values in their every day context. The idea is to encourage the learners to consider how they themselves act in their everyday life – in school, at home, when playing with friends – and how they can change their views of other people.
- Since 1998, the Macedonian Red Cross runs a programme “*Promotion of Human Values – Red Cross in Action*” where young people are equipped to design and carry out small scale projects addressing the humanitarian needs of their local community. It has successfully promoted a culture of dialogue amongst youth between different ethnic groups, as a basis for an intercultural society and an active approach toward life through humanitarian values. The programme is now also carried out in Macedonia’s neighbouring countries of Bosnia Herzegovina, Albania, Serbia and Croatia.
- The Uganda Red Cross Society, a leading humanitarian organisation in its country, counts 80% of youth among its 200,000 members and volunteers. The young people

are organised through youth structures in and out of school. Throughout the country, they participate in education for peace through the dissemination of the RCRC principles and international humanitarian law. In fact, peace education forms an integrated part of all humanitarian assistance programs brought in conflict-ridden Northern Uganda. The youth in two branches are also involved in the provision of psycho social support to traumatized returnee children now that peace has returned to the region.

- Another example in Africa is the Sierra Leone Red Cross. It uses drama, songs and marches trained peer educators to launch sensitization campaigns within communities large and small and disseminate humanitarian values and respect for diversity to a population ravaged by unspeakable horror in recent years.
- In the Americas, the Colombian Red Cross has developed a successful programme called PACO, standing for “Peace, Action and Co-existence”. PACO was originally created by the Colombian Red Cross Youth as a peace education programme. PACO consists of training workshops and activities that help young people to avoid aggression with others, build communications, care for their environment, care for themselves. The programme is implemented in areas of conflict, disseminated amongst paramilitaries and guerrilla groups, works with indigenous populations and other minority groups and closely involves all sections of the community including parents and teachers.

This last example illustrates how well the Red Cross Red Crescent’s approach can bridge formal, non-formal and informal education, as PACO has been successfully implemented throughout Colombia at both school and after-school, and community levels.

We in the Red Cross Red Crescent very much value the action taken by Save the Children to launch this global debate on education for peace. We will make use of the strength of the debate and the suggestions it is bringing forward in our work in nations and local communities around the world, and look forward to finding new and productive partnerships with others.

The sharing of ideas and the building of such partnerships, with lasting benefit to peace itself, will be an enduring legacy of this important exercise.

**Juan M. Suarez del Toro R.**  
**President**

**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**  
**(formerly the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies)**  
**Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize (1963)**



## International Campaign to Ban Landmines

Children and young people can be powerful advocates, as they tell their stories and share their feelings with frankness, and as they challenge world leaders to protect people and preserve the world they will inherit.

Back in 1995, a young Cambodian landmine survivor started calling for a ban on antipersonnel landmines and asked all youth to join the “Youth Against War” campaign. She was 12 years old. As ICBL Youth Ambassador at events worldwide, Song Kosal succeeded at putting a face on the many lesser-known child landmine survivors around the world. Today, she continues to raise awareness around the world, while pursuing English studies in Phnom Penh.

A few years later, in 2000, another 12 years old landmine survivor, from Senegal, joined campaigners in Europe to urge all countries to join the Mine Ban Treaty. It was the first time Sarani Diatta was leaving his village in Casamance, a region affected by antipersonnel landmines in southern Senegal. Today, Sarani is leading the Landmine Survivors Association in Casamance, where the association has become the voice of the mine-affected communities, calling on the government to ensure survivors and their families can live in dignity, get the assistance they deserve and see their rights respected.

Kosal and Sarani are two shining examples of how children can “Rewrite the Future” and challenge adults to help.

At the ICBL, we are very fortunate to have worked with amazing young people from Afghanistan, Cambodia, Colombia, Kosovo, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Senegal, and other countries torn apart by war, and affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war. In the middle of a difficult situation, they were lucky enough to have access to quality education, which, in addition to food, shelter and care, led them to take the reins of their life, and to advocate for change.

The “Rewrite the Future” initiative can play a vital role in raising global awareness about the essential need for education for children affected by armed conflict. It can help bring about meaningful new positive actions to promote quality education for all children, and truly contribute to a real change of minds.

**Sylvie Brigot**  
**Executive Director**

**International Campaign to Ban Landmines**  
**Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize (1997)**