Education for all in the conflict zones of Uganda:
Opportunities, Challenges and a Way Forward

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# EDUCATION FOR ALL IN THE CONFLICT ZONES OF UGANDA: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND A WAY FORWARD

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- Humanitarian Concerns
- Early Childhood Development
- Formerly abducted
- Special Issues for Girls and Child Mothers
- HIV/AIDS
- Promotion of Education for All
- International Community Support
- MOES Structure Support

## RAPID ASSESSMENT MISSION 5 THROUGH 20 JANUARY, 2004

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- Promotion of Education for All
- HIV/AIDS
- Special Issues for Girls and Child Mothers
- Formerly abducted
- Early Childhood Development
- Adolescence
- Humanitarian Concerns

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Background
During the last two decades, Uganda has made enormous strides in providing the benefits of protection and development to its children. The initiation of a UPE system which makes basic education available to children from all walks of life as well as the development of effective strategies to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS have been models for the developing world. At the same time, conditions of armed conflict in isolated areas, most notably the north and east, have created exceptionally difficult conditions in these regions, hampering equal access to the benefits of education, health and economic opportunity.

Seventeen years of incursion by the Lords Resistance Army has caused extensive and intractable hardship. Because of this rebel group’s practice of abducting children to participate in the war, as well as that of burning homes and crops, destroying schools, mutilating and killing civilians, populations are continually displaced and moving, destroying traditional agricultural livelihoods and disrupting education and health care efforts made by government and international partners.

Over the past year, the war has become significantly worse. Estimates indicate that over 10,000 children have been abducted since March 2002—compared to 100 in 2001. To avoid abduction, many children travel to towns and trading centres to seek shelter at night. Once they get there, they are vulnerable to other forms of abuse and exploitation. Over 800,000 people are now living in IDP camps where health, nutrition and access to water and sanitation facilities are seriously compromised. Even from these camps, children are not safe sleeping at home at night.

International partners that have assisted children and families have withdrawn or curtailed many of their operations in the most severely affected areas due to the high level of insecurity. In the past, they have instituted many “best practices” that have both relieved suffering and fostered benefits, including research and critical dialogue leading to an increase in knowledge. Currently however, they have been forced to confine their efforts to accessible areas, often causing additional displacement and disorganization as populations who are able to do so flock to these areas in search of assistance.

In October 2002, the Ministry of Education and Sports took the decision to extend effective education and psychosocial support to all children in the war affected areas, including those considered inaccessible by international aid agencies. It has put in place policies designed to move the process forward significantly. Information has been collected from international and national partners as to the programs that they have instituted and the populations that they serve.

USAID, already funding a number of key initiatives for education, health and well being in Uganda as a whole and the conflict areas in particular, made this rapid assessment possible through its Basic Education Policy Support program (BEPS) in order to facilitate efforts to extend immediate and medium term support to those areas that are most underserved.
Rapid assessment mission 5 through 20 January, 2004

This mission was carried out in Kampala and in three conflict districts: Katakwi, Lira and Pader. The field team consisted of:

- Dr Martha Bragin, consultant, BEPS
- Mr. George Opiro Program and Education Officer, MOES division of Vocational Guidance and Counselling
- Mr. Patrick Bananuka, program assistant, MOES/BEPS
- Reverend Ocan Ali Onono, Executive Secretary, Fellowship for Peace (Jamii Ya Kupatalisha)

In Soroti/Katakwi the team was facilitated by Mr. James Odongo, Action Aid Uganda
In Lira the team was facilitated by Mr. Charles Webwire Program Coordinator Basic Education, Save the Children Uganda, and the Save the Children Lira Mobile Community Team
In Pader the team was facilitated by Mr. George Odong NGO forum, Lira and Pader

Goal

Propose a way forward to realize Education-For-All in the war-affected areas through a continuum strategy of more effective education through

- Support for teachers and students in access and retention
- Creation of appropriate “catchup” education
- Development of a strategy for the increased availability of non-formal education
- Integration of psychosocial methodologies into the curriculum to increase teaching and learning effectiveness.
- Develop a coordinated, inclusive strategy to meet the educational needs of all children in the conflict areas.

Objectives

- Review the different interventions currently in use to alleviate difficulties and capture and use best practices to develop a comprehensive framework
- Review gaps in the existing system and develop methodology for scientific review including: place, type of child, type of intervention
- Capture the vision of the affected people, upon which to build and enhance success of the education programmes in the North
- Assess capacity building needs of the NURSC working group to address the situation systematically
- Recommend a specific way forward to complete the work
Methodology

- Review of existing assessments and documentation, and training products
- Meetings with key players and partners
  - Persons and Groups Met In Kampala:
    - UNICEF/ USAID
    - International NGOs active in education and psychosocial support for war affected children:
      - Actionaid Uganda
      - AVSI
      - CCF
      - IRC
      - Save the Children Alliance
      - TPO
      - World Vision
      - UPHOLD
    - Northern Forum Representatives

Field visits were conducted from 9 through 16 January 2004.

Key contact meetings:
- Resident District Commissioner (RDC)
- District Security Officer (DSO)
- Chairperson LC5
- Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
- District Education Officer (DEO)
- District Inspector of Schools (DIS)
- Community Development Officer (CDO)
- Probation and Social Welfare Officer (PWO)
- Relevant local and international NGO staff
- Local CBO’s
  - Pader Women’s Development Initiative (PAWODI)
  - Christian Counselling Fellowship, Pader
  - Children’s Voice, Katakwi
  - Concerned Parents, Lira

Community focus group discussions were held with:
- Mothers
- Fathers and Elders
- Children (Boys and Girls) (including all vulnerable groups)
- Teachers (Female and Male)
- Traditional healers
Understanding children affected by armed conflict

Significant research has been done by actors on the ground in Uganda regarding the psychosocial effects of armed conflict on children. However it may be useful to review these concepts here with a section specially devoted to the specific effects on teaching and learning.

Despite the research, we heard children affected by armed conflict referred to by all levels of staff as “traumatized” which translates into local language as “mad.” Let us rather unpack the effects of violence on children and how that relates to their school behaviour.

Defining psychosocial

Psychosocial development refers to the way in which human beings’ growing to adulthood necessarily takes place within a social environment. While physical, sexual and cognitive growth is biologically based; they cannot take place without social interaction. Further, human development is a process in which children’s desires and impulses are mediated by community controls and rules that gradually become their own.

Because meeting children’s basic developmental needs are so important, cultures and communities everywhere in the world have established their own processes and structures to insure that they are met.

Psycho --- refers to thoughts, feelings, and internal experiences
Social ---- refers to interactions with other people, the community and the outside world. It includes economic realities as well as physical and cultural ones

How psychosocial programs help

First, children exposed to war and violence should not have their suffering compounded by the lack of food and shelter. Ensuring that basic needs are met is in itself psychosocial assistance. It lets children know that life will, in fact, go on, despite the terrible events that are occurring.

Programs then attempt to restore the normal routines of life, such as school, work, and play, so that children are not "stuck" in one moment in development. This is best accompanied by sensitizing the community to the developmental needs of children. As many opportunities as possible should be afforded to children to simply continue to grow up properly.

In order for normal routines to feel normal, special attention must be given to caregivers and teachers. Parents and teachers, like everyone else in the community, have been affected by the violence that they have experienced. They must be assisted to metabolize and manage that which they have experienced in order to be able to assist the children in their charge. Otherwise, they may have difficulty performing their normal daily tasks normally. Support for parents and teachers should be ongoing in time of crisis, so that children can experience life as “normal” again, or for the very first time.

Once the basic structures of daily life are re-established, psychosocial programs are designed and put into place to assist children with the effects of the violence that they have experienced. Crucial in this regard is the restoration of the culturally accepted means for the integration and symbolization of the events experienced. This integration and symbolization must be achieved not only by individuals, but also by the community as a whole. In the war affected areas of Uganda, means already exist, both traditional and more contemporary, through which calamitous situations can be integrated. Traditional
birth attendants and healers play a role, as do churches and mosques. Healing takes place through cultural activities such as music, dance, story telling, and community theatre. Over time, these activities assist the community in developing a sense that it has a viable future, while incorporating into the basis of common knowledge the terrible events that have occurred.

Programs are also designed that provide the means for youngsters to feel that they can do some good within the community, and can be active protagonists in building a secure future. Younger children may find assisting the elderly, caring for animals, or participating in other related activities that they might have undertaken in more normal circumstances very useful in this regard. For older children, participating in community reconstruction projects or non-violent security activities can be very effective. It is also beneficial to adolescents to be given the opportunity to identify community problems and help fashion appropriate solutions in which they can take part.

All of these activities help children to reduce their "bad" feelings about the violence that they have experienced and come to terms with the emotions that the violence has evoked. They are provided with a sense that they can grow up to be good people who are not forever "tainted" by the violence that they have witnessed and experienced.

Psychosocial Reintegration
While demobilization represents the point at which a child leaves military life, and reunification represents the return to family life, reintegration represents the process by which the child establishes a future in civilian life. Reintegration programs need to support the child in constructing a new positive course of development. This process takes place over time and must be mediated consistently through members of the community whom the child and family know well.

The limitations of “PTSD” in the context of the conflict areas of Uganda
The concept of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder was first developed in the United States to understand the long lasting effects of exposure to extreme violence in combat veterans fighting far from home. When they returned to their home towns, they continued to suffer from intractable symptoms, despite the fact that they were living in comfortable homes, and in no continuing danger. This concept was then expanded to include rape and incest survivors and survivors of torture and other atrocities subsequent to state violence. Later, the conceptual framework was further expanded to include children.

In applying these understandings to Ugandan children affected by the ongoing conflict, we must be conscious of the particularities of their situation.

Ongoing conflict
The current conflict is ongoing and evenescalating at the present moment, and therefore, there is nothing “post” about it. While those who return from abduction have left one set of troubles behind, they remain at risk along with the general community, while at the same time face an uphill battle of reintegrating into the community that they have left behind. Some children reported being continuously stigmatized in the community following escape from abduction. However, before this issue could be addressed, a teacher was abducted from the local school.

Normal reaction to abnormal circumstances
Because the conflict is ongoing, it would be “abnormal” or reflect some inability to appropriately assess and respond to the situation if the children had no reaction at all to the violence in their surrounds. It is appropriate that they consider the ongoing violence as disruption, rather than
simply routine. Therefore we would not like to view their difficulties as disorder, but rather a normal and usual reaction to abnormal circumstances. While some children may be so distressed as to require more specific intervention, we would see that distress as specific and treatable.

**Taking age and stage of development into account**

While there is no uniform definition of childhood, Ugandan cultures have a clear idea of passage from one stage of life to another and the roles and responsibilities accruing to each. Cognitive development goes hand in hand with physical maturation – younger children think and integrate differently from older ones, with the capacity for complex thought coming along with puberty in the early ‘teen years. Reactions to violence and need and capacity to heal are based on these developmental stages. Appended to this report is a questionnaire to help establish appropriate developmental markers and milestones for children in the conflict zones of Uganda, as well as information regarding theories of cognitive development. These become particularly important in looking at how children affected by conflict are best helped to learn: what materials are needed, what methodologies work best, etc.

**Unpacking trauma:**

**Physical discomfort**

Children are physically hungry, because their family’s livelihood is disrupted and they cannot grow food in the displaced camps. They are often either hot or cold, and lack of usual sanitary facilities makes them uncomfortable. They are often ill due to malnutrition, exposure (especially to malaria) and bad drinking water. In the Erruta camp in Lira, some children were too weak to brush flies from their faces. About three children die of preventable diseases every week in this camp, despite an emergency feeding program put into place by MSF.

**Fear**

Children have been abducted, tortured, raped and killed in the region for over 17 years. Therefore, they always fear that this may happen to them. Anticipating a terrible event without knowing when it may occur causes children constant anxiety. Since they are often sent to sleep far away from family members, in town or in the bush to keep safe, they may feel insecure during the night and sleep badly. Children reported that they worried all night that if they fell asleep they would be taken by the rebels. In the towns, they appear to “party” all night, because they are in fact afraid to go to sleep --- due to fear of abduction, sexual abuse, or nightmares.

**Great sorrow/unmourned losses**

Both war and abduction and HIV/AIDS have caused children to lose close loved persons including parents, aunts and uncles, and siblings. So much death has occurred that they are often not able to absorb the loss and their accompanying feelings. In the case of abduction they may not know if the person is alive or dead, and may not have had the opportunity to participate in mourning rituals.

Those who have been abducted have lost many comrades along the way, including those that they have left behind when being rescued. Girl mothers have a particularly difficult situation in that they have lost the father of their baby who was both their oppressor and the only person with whom they shared the parenting of their baby.

**Hopelessness**

Fear of impending death or destruction, the loss of familiar surroundings, people that one loves and even things that one may have cared about, accompanied not only by one’s own hunger and illness but the hunger, illness and distractibility of the adults and trusted people in one’s surroundings can lead to a sense of exhaustion and a loss of hope or vision for the future. When children were asked in focus groups to imagine their future, most could not answer. Instead, one said, “we will always be running from the rebels: we are going to die in this place.”
Exposure to extreme violence
When the state of mind described above is combined with exposure to extreme violence, the world becomes a stark place indeed. All people are born with a certain amount of aggression that is expressed in the games and dreams of very young children. Time, love and care mediate that aggression and it is soon repressed and not thought of any more. When one is forced to observe people actually carrying out such acts of aggression, it may be more than the mind can endure. People in such circumstances are typically reduced to seeing the world in a flat way, as imagination is stifled in an attempt to prevent the violent acts from coming into memory. Sometimes, memory itself is disturbed. Sleep becomes troubled as the memories attempt to break through, and flashbacks sometimes occur at unwelcome times. Children often feel guilty for atrocities that they did not commit, or may not remember or be able to own those that they did commit.

Participation in murder and atrocity
Conscience normally is developed by the age of 6 and the actual committing, as opposed to dreaming about or fantasizing, violent acts, is unacceptable to the child if he or she is aware of what has happened. They suffer from all of the difficulties described above with additional features. These children expect murderous retribution at every moment, not only from their captors, but from all authority figures, real and imagined. They often “split off” their anger and hurt, and are unsure of what actions they have taken, and what events were only dreams. They have difficulty with focus and concentration and usually also have psychosomatic difficulties, such as headaches and sleep disorders. They often commit petty acts of thievery or other small illegal acts as they seek out the retribution that they believe they deserve. This is mixed with a “false” presentation of self that is “slick” and unreal, or an attitude that they are simply bad, and will be outcast forever.

Critical to the treatment of these children is the opportunity to do good things and help others as well as repeated cleansing ceremonies or prayers, over time, accompanied by opportunities to actually build the future along with others. They cannot of course undo what has been done, but learn to forgive themselves and live with their past through the acknowledgement of its reality, and opportunities to participate with other children in positive activities.

Contemporary ways of thinking about the effects of violence on children
Witnessing or participating in violent events affects all people, but it affects children differently depending as stated above, on age and stage of development. Exposure to violence affects children both cognitively and affectively.

On the affective side.
In addition, exposure to violent events wakes up aggression in people who observe or are victims of it. All people are born with a certain amount of untamed aggression. Usually, among the important tasks of society is helping children to bring that aggression under control, moving it from something that they experience as babies, to something that they “play out” as young children, to something that they harness for energy to do other things later in life. Constant exposure to violent events continually stimulates their own aggression. They become excited by the events, and feel aggressive themselves. They find themselves feeling angry and unable to settle down. Unwelcome and violent thoughts come to mind. They feel badly, but also often as though they themselves are bad, for having such terrible thoughts and feelings.

These fears and preoccupations can affect children’s ability to attend to lessons, sit still in class and get on with the business of learning. When we combine these with any of the personal and family problems that result from the poverty and close quarters of the IDP camp environment, we can see that it is an overwhelming task to calm down and concentrate at school or at home.
Attempts to calm down and banish these violent and unwelcome feelings take up a great deal of "mental space." Trying not to think about the bad things often makes it hard for children to think about anything at all.

Feeling overly excited by the repeated dangerous and potentially violent situations that they are exposed to, makes children feel bad about themselves. The opportunity to do something good can make them feel better. This is called reparation. Even young children can do something that helps the community or family members. Helping children to make reparation is one of the critical hallmarks of psychosocial programming.

**On the cognitive side:**
Most important for developing children is their capacity to symbolize: that is, to take material from the world around them and make it comprehensible. One of the worst things about exposure to extreme violence is that it takes events that should be in the realm of fantasy---movies, dreams, children's games---and acts them out in the real world. When that which should be imaginary becomes real, it breaks the boundary between fantasy and reality and with them the way in which children learn to use metaphor for thinking.

When events that are violent and beyond the normal happen, children’s capacity to make mental use of these events is strained. Exposure to extreme violence makes it hard for people to think. It makes it hard for teachers to teach, and it makes it hard for students to learn. This often affects grades and school performance.

One significant psychosocial result of the ongoing conflict then is the decrease in capacity for symbol formation and reflective function among children, with short term consequences of inattention and poor school performance, and longer term consequences of concrete thinking and poor ability to master difficult interpersonal situations.

When children have difficulty thinking they often behave badly at school, because they are angry and frustrated by their inability to understand their lessons, but also because they tend to act in ways that repeat aspects of the violent experience, when other types of thinking fail them.

When they are faced with large classrooms and little chance to struggle through the material and learn how to think clearly, they may experience themselves as stupid, uncared for, and simply give up.

However, with direct attention, opportunities to do good things for the community, continuing opportunities for spiritual cleansing (a symbolic act) and symbolic activities such as art, dance, drama and story telling, research tells us that children can improve dramatically.

**Special educational techniques that assist war affected children**

War affected children can be helped with these problems through specific educational interventions. Many of these interventions incorporate best practices for participatory education that are already being piloted here in Uganda. They are:

**Support to teachers and parents**

Parents and teachers, like everyone else in the community, have been affected by the violence that they have experienced. They need assistance to understand and absorb the terrible events that have happened to them before they can assist the children in their care. Most of the psychosocial handbooks in use in Uganda today emphasize this point very strongly.
Parents can be supported through community activities and discussions groups sponsored by the School Management committee, or through the creation of child well being committees that assist parents to cope with hardships.

Teachers have shown that they need psychosocial intervention, based on their “concrete” responses to direct questions and their sense of helplessness and hopelessness. Training in these methods, coupled with psychosocial support and the receipt of a certificate of recognition for their training can help them to feel valued and effective.

Support for parents and teachers should be ongoing in time of crisis, so that children can experience life as “normal” again, or for the very first time.

**Setting up a decentralized classroom**

This model is already being taught to head teachers in Soroti through the TDMS program. In this model, students are placed in small groups, with the teacher teaching a formal lesson to one group of no more than 20 students. The other students are placed in groups doing practice for the lesson, or other activities, lead by a senior student or an assistant teacher, recruited and trained from P7 or S4 leavers among the IDP population.

**Direct, one to one attention**

Research in the UK and US on treating the effects of violence on children has shown that the effects should be mediated through work with a consistent person, who is available to endure the child’s expressions of “badness” and even angry feelings over time, without becoming angry or being destroyed. That person can be an elder from the community, or a well trained volunteer, or a teacher. However, the attention has to be focussed on the child in a small enough group for that child’s own ideas to be heard.

At the same time, one to one attention helps the child to focus attention on the subject at hand. It calls the child out of his or her day dreams or blank state by calling the name directly, speaking to him or her clearly and looking directly at the child.

**Permission to express unwanted thoughts**

Children should have a special time for expressive activities where all thoughts are acceptable. They can simply say them out loud without being questioned or attacked, and encouraged to refocus attention on the subject at hand. Many local training manuals are available to help teachers and caregivers to know how to respond. An example is, “George, I know that you have been really feeling badly since your brother was taken away. Anyone might have those feelings. Can you join us for the lesson now or do you want to go to do an art project until you have calmed down?

**Symbolic activities**

Symbolic activities like art drama and dance help children learn to take the stark world in which they live mentally and turn it to symbols. They may start by drawing everyday things and only after time will start to draw or write about their feelings, as they come to know them. Having a trained art assistant in the classroom to meet with the children regularly, for two periods a week, in small groups is very helpful.

Remember: never press a child to discuss his or her feelings or experience. Let the child choose what they express, and how they express it as long as they respect the rules of the classroom and don’t harm themselves or others.
There are drama techniques that are known in Uganda, and others developed in other parts of the world that help children specifically to symbolize their experience and resolve problems. These should be encouraged.

Literal songs like “I have been defiled and raped,” may be written by children in the beginning. They are part of the problem, not the solution and should be replaced by parables from the bible or stories about animals, birds and the like, showing that they are forming symbols, not just reciting horrors literally.

**Problem solving**
Helping children to think of solutions to practical life problems, as well as the kind of problems that are utilized in maths are helpful in helping children to begin to think and reflect. Problem solving activities should encourage age appropriate thinking patterns to be established and re-enforced. In the appendix there is a discussion of Vygotsky and Piaget’s ideas about cognitive development, which can be helpful.

**Utilizing manipulatives and movement in the classroom**
Children who are having trouble managing to sort out difficult thoughts and ideas are helped by doing practical things. Locally available learning materials can be used for children to do remedial and practical work so that they understand their lessons better. Kyambogo University has many examples of how to develop such materials readily available.

By having children stand up and move to another learning area at the end of the lesson, it also gives a chance for them to “wake up” and to refocus attention.

**Lifeskills discussions and HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention**
When children have been over-stimulated by violence, they often have difficulty concentrating on abstract subjects. HIV/AIDS materials are body based. They encourage children to talk about their own bodies, the bodies of others and realities of their lives. These techniques have been very effective in helping children to concentrate and participate successfully at school. Once they have done this, they are often better able to turn to more abstract lessons. Conversely, many abstract subjects can be taught in the context of the “practical” and body-based instruction.

**Bringing local knowledge into school**
When schools utilize local knowledge and honour respected elders and leaders, they help children to experience continuity from the past to the present. This helps them to remember that they are more than the terrible things that they have experienced — they are part of a valuable tradition that has existed for a long time before them, and will continue somehow into the future.

**Putting “More Effective Education” into practice in the conflict zones now**

**What’s in place now:**
- Kyambogo University and Gulu University, who have worked with UNICEF and its psychosocial partners to develop a more effective education for war affected children, continues to train CCTs, headmasters and others through TDMS. Interactive training handbooks already exist although new ones can be developed as well.
- UPHOLD has funds available to support local districts to implement these models upon request by the district.
A step by step "to do" list:

- University Partners along with CCTs provide training and support to DEOs and DISs to understand and support the process should be done in a participatory and collaborative manner (again this can be funded by UPHOLD on the DEO’s request).
- Participatory training of teachers in war affected districts begins, leading to certification in teaching children affected by armed conflict, led by CCTs with support and assistance through University partners, NGO partners, and UPHOLD
- P7 leavers who are now out of school, recruited, organized and trained to become teaching assistants, so that small classroom groups can be created.
- Parents, school management committees and parent teacher organizations are provided with workshops on effective teaching of children affected by armed conflict
- Community mobilization takes place to plan how to create the effective learning environment (CCF has skills, UPHOLD has funds to assist MOES to arrange this.)
- Community members build temporary classrooms, large enough to house decentralized methods
- Teachers establish decentralized classroom with small groups (British infant school model) utilizing the teacher assistants.
- Teachers introduce learner centred problem solving activities
- Psychosocial activities are incorporated into the classroom day, especially art and problem solving theatre
- Life skills curricula developed and piloted (again, DEO’s can be funded through UPHOLD on their request).
- HIV/AIDS curriculum is utilized to teach problem solving
- Peace education curricula piloted as they are developed, and researched for effectiveness and applicability.

The role of after-school clubs for war affected children

The classroom techniques described make teaching and learning possible in war affected areas. More troubled children, (i.e. formerly abducted, girl mothers, sex workers, and abused children) need additional help to feel better and to grow up to be functioning members of their communities.

After school clubs are an important way to supply the elements of community based psychosocial care that are necessary for full reintegration into society and adjustment following exposure to, and participation in, violence. Having a group to belong to makes us all feel less alone with our troubles and problems seem possible to overcome.

Formerly abducted and war affected children, who are now contributing to society on many levels here in Uganda, all reported membership in after school clubs as an important part of their adolescence.

However, clubs need leaders. Teachers in several IDP camps in Pader have been organizing such clubs, without extra pay, training or support. Churches played an important role in Lira. Again, in Soroti, Kyambogo University TDMS trainers were aware of the importance of clubs and could organize leadership training.

The international NGO partners have all been involved in such programs in the past. A working group should address how they can facilitate the proliferation of such groups in areas that they can no longer enter directly. Leaders of such clubs need training, support and some payment for the clubs to be sustainable.

The most critical psychosocial functions of the club are listed below.
**Community Service**
Members of the group volunteer to do practical things to help improve the community and get together at regular times and places to do these things. They should choose their own activities according to their ability, age and stage of development. Examples are: organizing and participating in cleaning of IDP camps; HIV/AIDS awareness activities; helping grandmothers caring for small children; organizing hygiene promotion activities.

Reparation is both a psychological and social activity. Psychologically, it helps children who feel badly about the bad things that they have seen and done to feel better. Socially it helps improve the community.

**Income generation**
Since material survival is on everyone's mind in war affected areas, children need support in finding ways to earn. With guidance from a teacher or community leader, these children can do an informal market survey to find out how best to make money in the community without engaging in hazardous forms of labour. Working together, they can support one another, and share earnings as a group. Ideally, they can be sponsored by local craftspeople and businesses in host communities. As they participate in this activity they can share their worries and fears about survival. This gives both psychological and material support.

These programs have in the past been led by international NGO's. Where these organizations are unavailable, they can support indigenous leaders and teachers to organize the activities and monitor them when it is safe enough.

**Spiritual and Cultural Activities**
Learning about the culture and traditions of the community helps young people to transcend the difficulties of daily life, and keeps hope alive. The advice of elders helps young people with problem solving, and can provide referral of those in need for more specialized services.

**Community activism**
Analyzing the root causes of problems and solving them is an important skill that elders teach in Uganda. This is of course one of the fundamental rights of the child. It is also a critical element of cognitive development. In addition, activism supports hopefulness. A person in the process of solving problems, no matter how difficult the process, has greater self esteem than a person who is simply a victim. Guided by their elders, children should analyze the source of their problems and become active participants in their solution. Action Aid has a great deal of experience in this arena and could teach other organizations.

**Having fun**
Playing is children's right. It is also children's most important work, as play helps children to symbolize experience. Sports teams can be as important as theatre, and the making of balls and props as important as the tournaments and performances themselves. Young people should choose the activity that they enjoy.

**Community Based Reintegration**
While NGO's and CBO's have been supporting reception centres which combine the best methods for transitional treatment for formerly abducted children, centre based treatment is only the beginning of healing process. Community based reintegration was originally an integral part of the program in Kitgum and Gulu districts. However the current situation has ended these best practices. The communities that we visited now report that the children do not receive follow up reintegration services.
The following elements are necessary to successful community reintegration:

• Meetings with family and then between family and child so that they can become reacquainted
• Meetings with the committee of 7 elders to discuss what the child has actually done and to plan for any reparation that is necessary to the community
• General sensitization of the community
• Enrolment into education program and work if possible and appropriate
• Discussion of what the child can and will contribute as a service activity to the family and community.
• Enrolment of the child into a youth club, (such as watwero in Kitgum) or a group program to do a specific community service, discuss common problems and solutions, generate income, and have fun
• A committee consisting of a specific elder, a family member and a community volunteer counsellor to visit the child at least once per month to check on how he or she is doing
• When the child shows signs of difficulties, new ceremonies, prayers or counselling should be activated
• Regular sensitization activities including theatre and song to sensitize the community to accepting these young people. The children’s participation in activities that support the community’s well being will help a great deal!

Situation Report on the Education in the Conflict Zones:

Opportunities

Policy Programmatic Interventions

• The MOES is committed to education for all in the conflict zones and has policies to support its implementation
• There are policies in place to provide extra pay to teachers who teach in hard to reach districts within the conflict areas
• Teachers are willing to teach in the conflict areas despite danger to themselves
• There are policies in place to institute best practices in participatory teaching and learning to support education for all in the conflict zones
• The EMIS can gather and disseminate information on student and teacher locations

Best Practices

• UNICEF has developed a child friendly school program that supports best practices in teaching as well as sanitation, health and nutritious feeding at school.
• Breakthrough to Literacy provides a cultural bridge from home to school while improving children's school performance
• Teacher training curriculum for effective education of children in armed conflict has already been piloted by Kyambogo University in Soroti
• A department of Peace and Reconciliation Studies in Gulu university is developing peace and cultural identity curricula
• UNICEF has developed a Second Chance ("catch-up") COPE curriculum that enables students to accelerate their learning and return to the formal system
• UPHOLD funds and supports initiatives in learner centred, more effective education
• In at least one IDP camp, community initiatives through the school management committee have insured children’s school attendance and facilitated the building and creation of participatory learning environments
• AVSI, IRC, Save the Children, TPO and UNICEF have developed materials for Mediated Learning, psychosocial support and psychosocial training for teachers
• The Fellowship for Peace (Jamii ya Kuputalisha) and Catholic Relief Services are piloting peace education curricula that are culturally appropriate for the region. One such curriculum, Matuput is already in use in Gulu
• The ORACLE program supports research and practice as to effective ways to promote education over exploitive labour for children
• ORACLE through IRC and AVSI is beginning a proper market study toward a vocational training program that includes training apprenticeships business skills, start up kit, and relationship to business enterprises
• Peace clubs involve school going children in activities related to their situation
• Save the Children in Lira is still doing community based reintegration and follow up activities for formerly abducted children
• Drama, music dance and even girl guide clubs function in the camps are enjoyed by those who attend

Community Initiatives and Resources
• Parents are willing to volunteer to store, cook and distribute food for school based feeding
• Elders, including traditional healers and traditional birth attendants, have received lifelong traditional training in counselling methods, including the ability to find out and treat the root causes of psychological problems
• Communities are aware of their traditional values and are able to articulate how they should be taught
• There are community based groups able and interested to provide community based services to former child soldiers, and other war affected children: Kicwa in Kitgum, PAWODI and Christian Counselling Fellowship in Pader, Children’s Voice in Katakwi
• Community based initiatives in inaccessible regions support programs for young mothers and child headed households
• Children and parents overwhelmingly support government education efforts and believe in the education system

HIV/AIDS
• The PIASCY HIV/AIDS curriculum has been developed and piloted at MOES level
• Save the Children Norway has studied these issues extensively
• Save the Children Norway study shows that war affected children and youth know how HIV/AIDS is contracted

Child Soldiers
• International and local agency reception centres are functioning and continuing to provide comprehensive care including medical, psychosocial, educational and spiritual services while the youngsters are in their care, i.e. World Vision, Gusco, and Kicwa, centres
• Local initiatives have begun to collect those children who are not receiving adequate community services and begun providing for them.

Early Childhood Development
• Community members raised concern about the need for ECD programs to be established
• Materials exist for ECD programs which are piloted and successful outside of conflict areas
• Young mothers in support programs provided good parenting to small babies including interaction and mutuality
Adolescence

- Watwero, a Kitgum based adolescent organization has worked with the Women’s Commission For Refugee Women And Children in research and the formulation of a youth agenda
- Vocational schools are planned for the districts

Challenges

**MOES**

- DEOs/DIS have not been apprised of new concepts in effective education
- Training for trainers and teachers themselves in new concepts of effective education is slow in coming
- Schools in districts receiving students from war affected regions are crowded
- The population is constantly changing
- Hardship pay has not been received
- Teachers are in danger when they leave camps
- Teachers’ pay goes to central bank where it may be unsafe to collect it
- Information as to the whereabouts of pupils and teachers is difficult to obtain
- CCT’s may not be enough to support and mentor teachers in conflict situations
- Many teachers are dispirited and hopeless about their own future
- In receiving districts, teachers and students are widely dispersed from one another making tracking difficult

**Infrastructure Issues**

- Classrooms are too small and class sizes too large to utilize participatory and decentralized methodologies in war affected communities
- Temporary classrooms flood in rain and fill with dust in dry season
- When new permanent classrooms are built they must often be abandoned due to conflict borne population shifts

**Curriculum Issues**

- Materials are unavailable
- Teachers may not be aware of learner centred, participatory techniques
- There are not assistants available to teachers who are aware of the techniques to utilize them effectively
- Life skills curricula are not available
- Peace education curriculum is not available and teachers are not yet trained to use it
- HIV/AIDS curriculum is not available on the ground
- Learning aids are not available
- The Cope curriculum is not established in schools
- There is no comprehensive program for Non-Formal Education

**International Community Support**

- Have been confused as to coordinating Ministries (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Affairs, Prime Minister’s office etc)
- Are unable to travel to most affected areas
- Have not conducted market or other study regarding vocational training initiatives
- Have had to abandon own best practices of community reintegration of former child soldiers due to the war situation
Promotion of Education for All

- Lack of food forces children to work instead of studying
- Children in child headed households have little time to study
- Second Chance curriculum is not available for those who want to rejoin formal education
- Many are hopeless about the future

HIV/AIDS

- Teachers did not have the materials they needed to introduce the PIASCY curriculum and did not feel confident in doing so.

Special Issues for Girls and Child Mothers

- Child mother’s are stigmatized as reintegration and community sensitization are no longer taking place
- Lack of sanitary towels and latrines make it embarrassing for older girls to study
- Girls are sometimes sexually harassed by male teachers

Formerly abducted

- No reintegration programs in the community leaving them stigmatized
- No second chance education curriculum available for those who want to rejoin the formal curriculum
- No way to earn a living in the community as vocational training was not tied to market resources
- Many are hopeless about their future

Early Childhood Development

- Small children are left unattended whilst family members search for food, wood and water, and sometimes get hurt, burn in the fireplace, or set the congested huts ablaze

Adolescence

- We were not able to observe adolescent programs
- Few are able to pay school fees to attend secondary school
- Secondary schools are not available in many districts
- There are few options for those who have finished primary school
- Many were unable to pass examinations due to the difficult learning conditions, missed classes and attacks on examination centres
- Adolescents are hopeless about their future

Humanitarian Concerns

- Minimum standards for hygiene, water and sanitation are not met in the IDP camps
- Food supply is calculated based on the ability to earn 40% of daily calories, but children earn this money through hazardous forms of labour, (sex work and small children breaking rocks or carrying objects that are too heavy) and often fall short
- Food security has been compromised through lack of cultivation, alternative means of support (income generation such as manufacture) under current conditions has not been discovered

Way Forward

The goal of the way forward proposed here is to rely as little as possible on emergency measures, although some are needed. Rather it is to utilize existing programs to turn the war affected provinces into a laboratory for sustainable best practices in effective basic education for
all. Where new programs are needed or recommended, they are development oriented and can be piloted for application outside of the conflict regions should they prove sustainable and successful. The only exception lies in the provision of humanitarian assistance, which, while outside of the competence of this consultancy, remains a concern for education of displaced children.

**Material Support to IDP children**

- School feeding is essential for these children to attend: otherwise the day is spent scavenging for food or engaging in hazardous forms of labour (the conflict situation precludes farming, animal husbandry or manufacture in the most affected areas.)
- Distribution of learning materials (books and pens) is necessary in destitute areas: these can be “earned” through family participation in support for the schools.

**MOES Structure Support**

- Create an MOES led committee consisting of relevant partners and the ministry to coordinate efforts toward education for all in the conflict areas
- Develop an inter-ministerial working group to coordinate activities for children in the conflict zones to avoid missed opportunities and duplication of efforts.
- Support EMIS to maintain regular, twice yearly tally of where children and teachers are, so that funds and resources can follow the children and their teachers
- Provide a resource registration procedure in all IDP camps so that teachers and health professionals who are equipped to serve the community are identified
- Provide technical support for the Northern Forum through the department of Career Guidance Counselling so that they can explore and advocate for the dissemination of best practices. CCTs should also be included.
- Develop a TOR for the Northern Forum that involves mobilization of communities, local government and local CBOs to work with school committees to monitor progress on the implementation of best practices and recommendations adopted from p 11 – 14 above
- Ongoing support and training should be provided for school management committees so that they can support the more effective school system. (Local DEOs can request funds and technical assistance from UPHOLD for this.)
- Expand school management committees so that they can manage more responsibilities in supporting, monitoring and evaluating basic education programs in the conflict zones.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

- MOES to work with NGO partners to develop systems monitoring and evaluation of school efficacy and performance in conflict zones
- School management committees are trained by MOES and NGO partners to implement community based monitoring and evaluation systems.

**Support to teachers**

- Arrange for payment to the community banking system so that whenever possible, teachers do not have to travel with their money
- Facilitate the payment of hardship pay
- Provide psychosocial support and counselling for teachers
- Provide structured training leading to a certificate in education of war affected children, to be recognized even after the conflict.

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1 For a to do list for “Putting More Effective Education into practice in the conflict zones now” see page 13 above
Infrastructure

- Assist communities that are on the move to construct temporary learning centres that are portable, so that they can move with them when they return to their communities.
- Assist communities to construct learning centre facilities that are large enough to accommodate the larger class structure and pupil centred teaching methodologies.
- Provide extra plastic sheeting so that these centres can have temporary rain-proof walls.
- Insure that when new schools or classes are constructed, the classrooms are large enough and furniture appropriate to the new methods of teaching.

Curriculum

- Utilization of existing funding streams to replicate best practices and bring programs to scale in conflict areas using them to pilot “more effective education” practices listed above and Breakthrough to Literacy.
- MOES follow up on the piloting and evaluation of peace curricula currently initiated by CRS and Jamii Ya Kupatalisha, and insure their utilization at district level.
- MOES coordinate efforts to pilot and evaluate NFE curricula in the conflict zones.

Catch up classes

- War affected districts should implement Breakthrough to Literacy and the COPE curriculum immediately in affected areas, as most students have lost time and need an opportunity to catch up at their own pace.
- Partners should work on supplementing this curriculum with missing elements such as peace education.

Non Formal Education

- Existing non-formal education programs should be brought to scale as soon as possible.
- The NFE working group should work with ORACLE and other partners to utilize market survey for vocational training.
- The NFE working group should initiate partnerships with the private sector to assist young people to learn skills that will help them to earn in growth industries.
- Specialized youth literacy curricula should be added where the reflect curriculum is being used so that literacy and numeracy goals can be reached by children.
- Research into most effective non formal curriculum methods should be utilized as NFE matures, so that best practices can be replicated.

Career Guidance and Counselling

- The career guidance and counselling department provide ongoing technical assistance to the incorporation of psychosocial activities into the school day for all children in war affected areas.
- The career guidance and counselling department provide training to volunteer traditional healers and traditional birth attendants to provide counselling to war affected children. (Traditional birth attendants to support sexually abused girls in particular.)

Adolescence

- Organize a “Teach for the Future” movement among P7 leavers in war affected areas that trains volunteers to work as classroom assistants in exchange for a scholarship to secondary school after two years of service.
- Provide support and training for local partners and teachers to organize at least 5 Ribbe club in each District. Districts can seek funding from UPHOLD for this.
**Girl Child at School**
- Have sanitary towels and knickers available to girls at puberty
- Support girls clubs such as gem
- Support recruitment of women teachers
- Sensitize school management committees and teachers to the adverse affects of male teachers harassing girls

**Early Childhood**
- Pilot the introduction of early childhood centres based on the existing ECD curriculum in IDP camps
- Train interested girl and boy heads of households to staff the centres
- Pay grandma-heads of households to teach traditional games and child rearing techniques

**Girls mothers, child, and granny-headed families**
- Make catch up programs available to these girls
- Ensure that they receive rations for their children as well as themselves, or for granny, at school so that they can afford to attend
- Where possible provide a group project of goat raising (one goat per household, revolving fund) to help with survival

**Formerly abducted children**
- Through the inter-ministerial working group, insure that reintegration services are provided to formerly abducted children on a continuing basis over at least a 2 year period
- Where no international NGO is available to do this, local partners such as Children’s Voice in Katakwi and Christian Counselling Fellowship in Pader should receive capacity building and funds to provide the service

**School Health**
- A school health committee should be established in collaboration with the relevant ministries to insure that health care can be provided to school children in conflict areas
- If drugs cannot be kept at school, referral and transport to health facilities should be organized with assistance from the school management committee
- A first aid kit should be made available to teachers as per their request

**HIV/AIDS**
- Hold workshops and support activities for teachers to build their capacity to utilize the PIASCY curriculum
- After school clubs be encouraged to do HIV/AIDS awareness and sensitization
- Recognize behaviours that place children at voluntary risk to contract HIV/AIDS as danger seeking and suicidal in addition to being economically driven, and provide psychosocial support accordingly

**Future Learning/ Knowledge development**
- MOES and Ugandan university partners should organize an all-African conference on best practices in the education of children in conflict zones

**Humanitarian Concerns**
- MOES officers locally should meet with OCHA to find ways to bring the material conditions of the IDP camps up to international standards, especially in the critical area of water and sanitation.
Persons Met
(to be inserted)

Abbreviations used
(to be inserted)

List of Documents Reviewed
From the Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda
• The National Policy on Internal Displacement (01/2003)
• Disaster Preparedness and Management: Policy Framework (12/2002)

From the Ministry of Education and Sports
• Basic Education Policy and Costed Framework for Educationally Disadvantaged Children (10/2002)
• Cabinet Memo Matrix on Intervention for Improving Education in the North (10/2003)
• Addressing effects of insurgency on education programmes in Northern Uganda

From UNICEF:
• Breakthrough to Literacy Evaluation Report December 2002
• Integrated Approaches to Psychosocial Support: Training guide (senior trainers)
• Integrated Approaches to Psychosocial Support: A trainer’s guide
• Guidelines for a child friendly school checklist
• Two day training workshop for teachers: facilitator’s guide to sanitation promotion
• Design for temporary classroom structures
• Video: A Community Approach to Primary Education: the COPE programme in Uganda

From AVSI
• Training Manual for Teachers
• Handbook for Teachers
• Resilience in Conflict: A community-based approach to psychosocial support in Northern Uganda (with UNICEF)
• AVSI and capacity building
• Educate Every Child, in the Family, in the Community, in the World

From AVSI and IRC:
• Psychosocial Support Programme: A Community Based Intervention in Kitgum and Pader Districts, Northern Uganda 1999 -2002
• IRC and AVSI in Uganda ORACLE project: Opportunities for reducing Adolescent and Child Labour Through Education
From IRC:
- Guide to Community and Youth Participation in Programming

From Save the Children Alliance:
- Protection and development of children affected by armed conflict: Report on the internal review of SCN-Uganda partnership project in Lira and Apec districts
- Save the Children Denmark
- How to go about “trauma:” A discussion paper
- HIV/AIDS and the Rights of Children in a Conflict Situation: Vulnerability of children and young people: local stakeholders and interventions approaches in Gulu District, Northern Uganda

From Actionaid Uganda and its counterparts
- Presentation to Ministry of Education and sports on AAU Work in Northern Uganda Focusing on Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building Work
- The Status of Education for Internally Displaced Children in Northern Uganda
- Towards a just and lasting peace in Northern Uganda: A Civil society View on the Conflict in Northern Uganda

From UPHOLD
- UPHOLD’s Integrated Education Strategy
Appendices
Some documents are attached here to help support and develop community action around effective education for children in armed conflict.

Learning about community concepts of child development and well being
This participatory assessment tool can be utilized as a mechanism to assess local perceptions, needs, and resources in a community and to facilitate the beginning of a community-based response action cycle designed to build coping/support mechanisms. It can also be used to facilitate a participatory process to assess changes in the behaviours and attitudes of children and youth as a result of the community coping/support mechanisms.

Focus Groups

Number
Limit the number of adults or teens to 7 to 15. For children 6-11 years of age, 10 children should be the maximum number in a focus group.

Participant Selection
Partner NGOs should select individuals and groups from communities in which they work.

Separate focus groups should be organized for: mothers; fathers and community elders; female adolescents; male adolescents; girls; and boys.

If relevant, groups can be further disaggregated into more/less educated, rural/urban, ethnicity, and/or by those from areas more/less affected by the conflict. Do not separate orphaned or disabled children but include them in the appropriate age and gender group.

Time allocation
Children’s groups take about 45 minutes; youth and men about 1½ hours; and mothers about 2 hours.

INTERVIEW GUIDE with Mothers/Primary Care-Takers and others who are intimately involved with children’s growth and development

Instruction: Think about a time when life was good, when there was no war and you were at home, with food to eat, and water to drink and your family around you.
☐ What is the first thing that happens when a new baby is born?
☐ How are infants cared for and by whom? What is the most important thing for a child to learn in the first months of life?
☐ At what age does a child walk? What changes at that time?
☐ At what age can a child walk unaccompanied?
☐ At what age does a child first talk? Say “no-no?”
☐ At what age can one begin to teach a child right from wrong? How?
☐ At what age does a child know that he is a boy (like father), or a girl (like mother)?
☐ What is a child like from 3 to 6 years old?
☐ At what age can a child begin to help the parent?

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Which parent and with what chores?  
At what age can a child begin to learn the important rules of the community?  
How are children taught these things and by whom?  
At what age can a child begin school or work? What makes this a good age?  
What is a child like from 7 to 12 years old?  

Instruction: Do we all agree that children [below adolescence] [whose bodies are not yet developed] see the world normally as their parents and teachers describe it?  
At what age does a child begin to see the world differently from what is told to him/her? (Think back on your own childhood)  
At what age can a person speak of these opinions to the family? In the community? Participate in community councils or meetings?  
At what age should a youngster carry a weapon? Defend the family? At what age is a person considered to be a proper adult in this community?  
List the characteristics that make a respected man or woman in this community? How do boys and girls learn these things? Are there special ceremonies associated with the acquisition of this knowledge? At what age is one expected to behave in this way?  
Are there any special danger signs that indicate that things are not going well in this regard? (For girls? For boys?) What do you do and with whom do you consult if things are not going well?  
At what age can a person get married? Who makes that decision?  

Has anything changed? What is different under current conditions?  
What is the first thing that happens when a new baby is born? Any special parties or celebrations?  
How are infants cared for and by whom? Are children learning the most important things in their first months of life?  
At what age are children walking? What changes happen here when they walk?  
At what age does a child walk unaccompanied?  
At what age does a child first talk? Say "no-no?" At what age can you begin to teach a child right from wrong? How?  
At what age does a child know that he is a boy (like father), or a girl (like mother)?  
What are children like from 3 to 6 years old?  
At what age do children begin helping their parents? Which parent and with what chores?  
At what age do children begin to learn the important rules of the community?  
How are children taught these things and by whom?  
At what age do children begin school or work? Why this age? What are children like from 7 to 12 years old?  
At what age does a child begin to see the world differently from what is told to him/her?  
At what age can a person speak of these opinions to the family? In the community? Participate in community councils or meetings?  
At what age should a youngster carry a weapon? Defend the family? What is necessary for a person to be considered a proper man or woman in this community?  
Are there any special danger signs that indicate that things are not going well in this regard? (For girls? For boys?) What do you do and who do you consult if things are not going well?  
At what age are people getting married? Who makes that decision?
COMMUNITY COPING MECHANISMS

This material can be recorded on a chart: what is in place/ what needs strengthening/ what is no longer in place.

- What were the celebrations and festivals in the community? Who participated? What were these celebrations like in good times?
- What did you do if you had a moment free from household work? Did you have occasion to socialize with other women during the course of the workday? Where and how?
- Were there women’s organizations or lending groups that women participated in?
- When your children were sick or had difficulties, what did you do, who did you consult?
- What was the custom when someone died?
- What was the custom when there was a natural disaster or other community problem?
- If someone’s child did not behave properly or was not growing up properly, what did you do? Who did you consult on these occasions?
- If a mother was under stress or having difficulty caring for her children, who would help her? Was there some way she could feel better?

Has anything changed? What is different under current conditions? What is/is not in place now?

- What celebrations and festivals do you do here? Who participates? What is different about these celebrations here/now?
- What do you do if you have a moment free from household work? Do you have occasions to socialize with other women during the course of the workday? Where and how?
- Are there women’s organizations or lending groups that women participate in?
- When your children are sick or have difficulties, what do you do, who do you consult?
- What is the custom when someone dies? Is this different from before? In what way?
- What is the custom when there is a natural disaster or other community problem?
- If someone’s child does not behave properly or is not growing up properly, what do you do? Who do you consult on these occasions?
- If a mother is under stress or having difficulty caring for her children, who should help her? Is there some way she could feel better?

INTERVIEW GUIDE with Fathers/Community Elders

DEVELOPMENTAL & BEHAVIORAL NORMS

Instruction: Think about how it was before the violence, How were children raised in the community?

- What do you believe is most important for a father to teach his children?
- At what age might a person first have independent thoughts?
- At what age might a person be permitted to express such thoughts?
- How and at what age are people taught right from wrong? What of a young person who has difficulty learning these differences?
- What is/was your view of the most important, necessary things to learn and accomplish in becoming a good man? A good woman?
- At what age should a young man marry? A young woman?
- At what age should a young person carry a weapon?
- How were decisions made in the community?
- How were disputes resolved in the community?
- Were there special ceremonies for the return of soldiers following war?
- Were there any methods by which a person who had acted wrongly could make restitution or be restored to the community? Were they different for children and adults?
- What were the customs of the community regarding births and marriages?
What were the customs of the community regarding famine, loss of income, violence, or another major difficulty?

Has anything changed? What is different under current conditions? What is/is not in place now?

(go through above list of questions again – check 2nd box to track progress through questions)

INTERVIEW GUIDE with Children/Youth

- Describe the place that you come from.
- What is it like there? (Talk about animals, weather, school, religious institutions, traffic if any, other descriptive factors.)
- What did a girl do all day from morning until night?
- What did a boy do all day from morning to night?
- (Be sure to probe for the following: Do they ever help their parents with chores or work? Which chores, when? When they go to sleep at night, does anyone tell them a story? Do they have dreams?)
  - How does a kid have fun here in this place?
- What are the celebrations and festivals in the community? Are they the same as before? If not, how are they different?
- Who participates in them?
- What are these celebrations like? Are they the same as before? How are they different?
- Did young people participate in any group activities? (Formal youth organizations? Sports Clubs? Other?)
- What is the best thing about this place?
- Is there anything that you don’t like? Is there anything dangerous or frightening for kids here?
- What is the worst thing about this place?
- What are the necessary qualities of being a grown man? Woman?
- Are there necessary things that a person must do to gain that status?

Close your eyes --- while your eyes are closed, you will grow big and bigger until you are an adult of? years (have children give age of adulthood)

Tell me about your life. (What do you do for a living? Family? Etc?) How will you have prepared for this?

I will clap my hands, you will return to your own age.

Do you have all the conditions necessary to grow up to accomplish these things? If not, why not? What is needed?

MATRIX

Name the 5 biggest problems affecting your community. Who should solve them? How should they be solved? What can you do as a child in this community?

Reprinted from "Evaluating psychosocial programs for children affected by armed conflict: a community based approach." By M. Bragin in Mind and Human Interaction (vol.12 number 4 spring 2002)
Introductory Meeting for a Violence Free Community Program
Meeting with elders, community leaders, teachers, traditional birth attendants and leaders of young people

Purpose: Introduce the concept: get the war out of our communities, out of our families, and out of our hearts and homes

♦ Discuss the ways in which the war has affected men and boys. (Allow them to time raise issues)
♦ Discuss the ways in which the war has adversely affected women and girls. (Allow them time to raise issues)
♦ Discuss the fact that if they don’t work against it, they will bring the violence back into their homes.
♦ Discuss the prospect of a program to address the issues of violence in the community, focused on assisting women and girls, men and boys.
♦ Map the various dimensions of the problem and its solutions—look at what exists in the community
♦ Set up a time for focus group discussion including elders, religious leaders, teachers, women, men, adolescent girls, adolescent boys, traditional healers, (male and female) and traditional birth attendants, for the purpose of understanding the issues related to violence in the community and in the home in depth and with all of their culture specific meanings, in order to develop a program.

Baseline Questionnaire for Understanding Sexual and Gender Based Violence

I. Women
Think back to a time when you were in your village.

♦ What was life like for a woman there?
♦ At what age could she voice her opinion in the community?
♦ What did a woman do all day long? (Make an itemized list from waking until sleeping)
♦ What makes a woman respected in the community?
♦ Who were women who gave advice to others?
♦ Under what circumstances could a woman be beaten?
♦ Did she have any one to turn to for help?
♦ Who did she turn to?
♦ How was the problem handled?
♦ Did it ever happen that a woman was raped?
♦ What happened afterwards?
♦ How was she treated by the community?
♦ Was there any way to restore her honour in the community?
♦ Who could do that?

During the war
♦ What does a woman do all day nowadays?
What makes a woman respected in this community?
At what age can she voice her opinion in the community?
It has been said that since the war there is violence in the community what kind?
How does violence affect women?
What can she, or others, do about it?
What about a woman who is raped — does it happen?
How is she viewed by the community?
Is there any method or person who can help her?
Can we think carefully — if rape is now prevalent in the community — are there persons/ methods/ ceremonies that could make those women clean again?
Are there opinion leaders in the community who could help a woman who has been raped to be accepted?
If violence against women is now prevalent in the community, who could we approach to change this situation?

II. Men
What was life like for a man in the village that you came from?
At what age did a man marry?
At what age could he voice his opinion?
What made a man respected in the community?
What qualities make a good man?
Under what circumstances can a man solve a problem by violence?
Were men ever violent at home or in the community? If so why?
What were the sanctions for such violence?
Who was in charge of this?
Were men ever violent against women?
Were women ever raped?
What were the sanctions against this?
What does a man do all day since the war has started?
At what age can he marry?
Voice his opinion?
What makes a man respected in the camp?
Are there problems of violence in this camp?
Toward whom are they directed?
What is done about them?
By whom?
In war, is it common that women are raped? Are there women in this community who have been raped during the war?
How do you think about this?
What will happen to these women?
Is there anyone with power to change that?
Who? How could they change that?
Are boys and girls ever raped during war?
What will happen to these boys and girls?
Is there anyone with the power to change these outcomes?
Who? How could they do it?
What is the way forward?

III. Girls
- Where did you come from?
- What was it like there?
- What did a girl do every day?
- What was the best thing about this community?
- What was the worst thing about this community?
- What did you want to do when you grew up?
- How old is a girl when she is grown up anyway?
- What was the most important day of a girl’s life?
- If a girl had a problem or a trouble, who could help her?
- What could that person do?
- Was there an event(s) that changed all of that? What happened?
- What does a girl do every day nowadays?
- What do you want to do when you grow up?
- What is the best thing that could happen to a girl in this camp?
- What is the worst thing that can happen to a girl?
- What can you do about it if something bad happens to you?
- Who can help?
- How can they help?
- What are the biggest issues facing girls today?
- What do you think is the way forward?

IV. Boys
- Where did you come from?
- What was it like there?
- What did a boy do every day?
- What was the best thing about this community?
- What was the worst thing about this community?
- What did you want to do when you grew up?
- How old is a boy when he is grown up anyway?
- What was the most important day of a boy’s life?
What made a boy respected in the community?
What made a man respected in the community?
How should a boy treat a girl? A woman?
If a boy had a problem or a trouble, who could help him?
What could that person do?
Did something happen to change all of that? What happened?
What does a boy do every day here?
What do you want to do when you grow up?
What is the best thing that could happen to a boy nowadays?
What is the worst thing that can happen to a boy nowadays?
What can you do about it if something bad happens to you?
Who can help?
How can they help?
What are the biggest issues facing boys today?
What do you think is the way forward?

V. Elders/ Religious leaders
Describe life in your community before the war
What values were important?
Who taught them?
What were the characteristics of a good man? Woman?
Was there any violence in the community?
Against whom?
Who handled it? How?
What were the rules of conduct between men and women?
What happened when those rules were violated?
Why was your community uprooted?
How are the relationships in the family?
Are there people in the community who have suffered from the violence of this war?
What are their manifestations?
Are there ways that you can treat them?
What is the way forward for the community as a whole?
Is it known that the enemy sometimes (often) rapes women?
If it would be normal for women who are raped to be required to commit suicide, can we, in time of war make exception?
If that is possible, who could ask that she be spared and make clean again?
Is there a religious leader or council of scholars who could speak about these changes to law or custom?
VI. Traditional birth attendants

- What was your main work with the women of your village?
- Were you ever asked to help in a case of violence in the home?
- If so, what did you do?
- What is helpful in these situations?
- Were you ever asked to help in a case of rape?
- If so what did you do?
- What happens to a woman when she is raped?
- Are there any treatments that you know that can cleanse her spiritually and in the eyes of the community?
- How has this war affected your work in the community?
- Is there more violence?
- What sort of violence?
- What can be done about it?
- What would you recommend as a way forward?

(Reprinted from Mothers and others: learning from women and girls about community resilience in time of war by M. Bragin in Mind and Human Interaction. (vol.13 number 2 summer 2003)
Basic Concepts in Psychosocial Work with Children Affected by Armed Conflict
(16 handouts for teachers and community workers)
What is Psychosocial Development?

Psychosocial development refers to the way in which human beings’ growing to adulthood necessarily takes place within a social environment. While physical, sexual and cognitive growth is biologically based; they cannot take place without social interaction. Further, human development is a process in which children’s desires and impulses are mediated by community controls and rules that gradually become their own.

Because meeting children's basic developmental needs are so important, cultures and communities everywhere in the world have established their own processes and structures to insure that they are met.

Psycho --- refers to thoughts, feelings, and internal experiences
Social ---- refers to interactions with other people, the community and the outside world.
CULTURAL FACTORS IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT

- People in different cultural contexts perceive, understand and make sense of events and experiences in different ways
- Different societies have different norms about responding to and deal with distressing events such as loss and death
- Understandings of, and responses to distressing events may be framed collectively rather than individually in many cultures
- Intervention strategies need to build on traditional norms and practices and to avoid inadvertently undermining them
- Continuity of culture and care is essential to the developmental process
Psychosocial Interventions: Key Principles and Approaches

1 Identify and strengthen the community’s existing coping mechanisms

2. A broad community development approach is often the most effective strategy for facilitating psychosocial recovery

3. Supporting families’ capacity should be seen as a key strategy

4. Children who have experienced wholesale change, loss and disruption benefit greatly from an early restoration of structure in their lives, a sense of purpose and the rewards of achievement

5. Key to the restoration of structure is support for the capacity of teachers and others who interact with children every day to continue to do so, recognizing that they too have suffered hardship

6. Care needs to be taken to avoid inappropriate responses, which may serve to inflict secondary distress on already vulnerable children
Community Coping Mechanisms: What are they and how do they help communities and families to raise their children well

All communities have mechanisms for maintaining homeostasis and managing adversity. When these mechanisms are in place children are buffered from many of the difficulties of life, and parents are assisted in helping their children overcome stress.

Some of these mechanisms are simply the parties, celebrations, and rituals of family life that keep people in good spirits or allow for the release of tension in difficult times. Such basic activities as the coffee ceremony in Eritrea, or the "mommy and me" group in North American cities help mothers manage their children comfortably. In Northern Uganda, families help children grow well through evening instruction by the fireplace, called the wang-oo.

Further, there are usually special provisions that a society makes for more serious difficulties. Children are then protected from developmental insult in difficult times by these means. For instance, working class people in Argentine cities call on the psychoanalyst; while the rural poor in Cambodia consult the kru khmer. In Northern Uganda, traditional healers counsel the children and families in order to learn the root cause of the difficulty and to address those root causes. Root causes are addressed through mediation, prayer, and symbolic activities derived from historic rituals.

To the extent that such mechanisms are in place, psychosocial needs of children can be met, even in adversity. When these mechanisms are overstressed or have been abandoned due to war and displacement, it may be necessary to assist the community to strengthen or restore them in order to restore balance to children.

If the new situation has created problems that were previously unknown (for instance young children being given drugs or committing atrocities), new mechanisms may be needed.
Characteristics and Social Supports of Resilient Children

Resilience is the capacity to withstand serious calamity without long-term harm. Studies show that children are resilient when certain personal characteristics and social supports combine to assist them.

1. Strong and continuing attachment to a caring adult
2. Socially competent at interacting with adults and children
3. Independent, but confident to request help when needed
4. Curious and explores environment
5. Plays actively
6. Adapts easily to change
7. Likely to think before acting
8. Confident that he/she can control some parts of life
9. Involved in many activities
10. Has multiple talents
Key Ideas in Communicating with Children

1. There are particular attitudes and approaches which facilitate communication with children though there are cultural variations

2. There are some specific skills and techniques which enable children to express themselves

3. The techniques used to interview children have a bearing on the interviewer’s effectiveness
FACILITATING CHILDREN’S SELF EXPRESSION

• A quiet tone of voice

• Gestures

• An appropriate degree of eye contact

• Attentive listening and demonstrating that the child has been heard

• Respect for the child’s feelings

• Avoid interrupting the child

• Ask open questions
Interviewing children and adolescents/General considerations

1. Make sure the child is physically comfortable. Both the child and the interviewer should be sitting. Offer the child water, and if you believe the child to be hungry, something to eat. Make sure that the child knows where the latrine or toilet is, before you begin.

2. Remove the idea that there are right or wrong answers, desirable or undesirable outcomes. Tell the child why you are there.

3. Introduce yourself, and ask the child to do the same.

4. Maintain a child-friendly style:
   - Use simple language
   - Allow adequate time
   - Allow for children’s limited concentration span
   - Maintain a non-judgmental attitude

5. Insure that the level of conversation reflects the child’s cognitive development and level of understanding.

6. End the interview appropriately.
LOSS, GRIEF, AND MOURNING

Studies in places as far away as China, and as nearby as Southern Sudan, show that when people a child loves die, are killed or suddenly taken away from them, children suffer from the loss.

They can also suffer when they are suddenly taken away from familiar surroundings or activities that they perceived as useful. This sometimes happens when children are sent away for studies or when they are demobilized from the armed forces.

However, culture, and age and stage of development, (what the child can actually understand), affects the way that they show their feelings. All cultures have rituals to help people understand and manage death and the loss of loved persons or transition to a new situation. Sometimes, during war, those rituals may not be performed. This usually leaves children distressed and worried.

Children who have suffered a big loss are often unable to understand it emotionally. They sometimes laugh when they want to cry, or seem dazed and blank. This is perfectly normal.
TALKING TO CHILDREN AFTER A LOSS

1. Always talk to children in context, expressing the continuity of life. Ask children to tell you who they were and what life was like before the loss, and only then listen to what has now happened.

2. Reassure grieving children that their feelings, however odd they may seem to you, are valid.

3. Help children to perform or participate in whatever rituals are usual. Ask the family what mourning rituals girls and boys can participate in.

4. Allow children to know that their survival will be assured by other family or community members.

5. If the children believe that they are responsible for the loss, allow them to participate in any ceremony that will purify or absolve them.

6. Allow the child to participate in all appropriate community discussions regarding the events. Let him know that his community will endure and that normal life will go on.
STAGES OF GRIEF AND MOURNING

1. DENIAL
2. ANGER/PROTEST
3. BARGAINING
4. DEPRESSION
5. ACCEPTANCE

The rituals associated with mourning are culturally sanctioned ways of passing from one phase of the mourning process to the other

Honour them!!
Common emotional difficulties of former child soldiers

Many children joined the fighting forces after having suffered terrible effects from war, such as surviving massacres and bombings, or the violent death of people that they love. They suffer from un-mourned losses. When they move into the armed forces, participation in combat teaches children to act violently, at ages when society is normally engaged in teaching them to control their violent impulses. Within the fighting forces, commanders monitor the use of violence. However, when the children return to quiet communities at home, they are left with excited violent feelings that they don’t know how to channel in a socially appropriate manner.

how psychosocial reintegration programs can help

The job of psychosocial reintegration is less to create programs than to work in a way that supports communities’ and families’ capacity to care for their children properly, while giving children the chance to adapt to their communities’ norms. These programs should assist in the creation of practical mechanisms that allow children who leave fighting forces to mourn their many losses. They also need help to neutralize the violent feelings that may have been aroused by participation in war, (a psychological effect) and utilize their energies creatively toward positive contribution to the community (a social one). Since communities affected by war are in urgent need of development activities, both economic and social, we try to integrate both psychological and social aspects into community development programs. We use the word psychosocial because psychological and social experiences are so interdependent that they cannot be teased apart.
Psychosocial Reintegration of Demobilized Child Soldiers

Definition:
While demobilization represents the point at which a child leaves military life, and reunification represents the return to family life, reintegration represents the process by which the child establishes a future in civilian life. Reintegration programs need to support the child in constructing a new positive course of development.

Checklist:

1. How can a community based psychosocial program be established?

2. Are traditional healing practices being identified, supported and made accessible to those with special needs?

3. Are discussions being held with religious leaders, teachers, health workers, and local activists on the inclusion of former child soldiers in community activities

4. Are recreational, cultural, religious and life skill building activities available and accessible?

5. Are their opportunities for the demobilized to serve the community in a meaningful and peaceful way?

6. Is non-formal education or accelerated learning appropriate to older children accessible? Is there a mechanism to waive school fees?

7. How can family and community small businesses be supported?
From sensitization to mobilization: participatory rural appraisal and effective child protection committees

It is widely viewed in child protection that the community must be “sensitized” to the needs and rights of children. To that end, workers often go out to the community with talking points in order to provide the community with information and ideas.

Often, they find that while the community participates and listens, they are reluctant to act on the plans that are presented to them. Here are some effective ways of involving the community in developing its own mobilization process for children.

Communities, and especially mothers, are experts in their children’s growth and development. They know more than anyone else, what children need to grow up to be healthy adults in their community. Moreover, communities have ways of responding to children in distress or to children who have committed acts of violence.

Sometimes, child protection specialists are worried about traditional practices that can be harmful to children, or the fact that they see children and young people silenced often, or beaten with big sticks.

Childrearing practices represent the heart of a community’s tradition. Talking to people will not change them. They will only change when the community is involved in a dynamic process that works on changing itself.

How is this accomplished?
Focus groups and discussions should be held with community leaders in which all significant actors are present. Discuss with them the problem that the team has come to address. Ask them about the situation of young people and children today. Ask what are their problems, hopes and aspirations for children.

Gain permission to hold focus group discussions that include mothers, fathers, elders, traditional leaders, teachers, t.b.a.s, traditional healers, health workers, religious authorities and girls and boys. Pose the issue to all of them: how should children be properly raised in our community? What are the current difficulties? How do we insure that children grow up well in spite of the war?

Pull their answers together, and then introduce the CRC and see how many items they have come up with already. Introduce and discuss how children have always participated in their society. Ask what measures they can take to include and protect vulnerable children, encourage participation, and promote children's well-being.

Help the community leaders to make a community action plan for children that is practical and meets community needs. Identify one thing that can be done for children now. Identify local leaders who begin a community monitoring system, and return to praise efforts that have been made for children.

We may not be able to stop the war, but we can get the violence out of our communities, our homes, our families and our hearts!
Some notes on working in translation

Sometimes it is necessary to work in translation. In these situations it is vital that:

• The translator be fluent in both languages, so that s/he can convey nuance

• The translator be briefed on the purpose of the interview so that s/he does not skew results with his own bias

• The translator spend a brief time talking with the interviewer, to ensure that they have a communication system --- that is that the translator does not alter the words of the interviewer, or of the children, even if he thinks that the child has said something inappropriate.

• Whenever possible, the translator be given some training on children’s development
Guiding Principles for Developing Community Based Psychosocial Programs for Children and Youth

- Always begin with a community participatory assessment of resources, needs, and existing cultural models for raising children. (If this is not done, the program will be based on the assumptions of the agency rather than the actual needs and interests of the community.)
- All programs developed for children in the community must be based upon that assessment.
- Such programs must work to strengthen communities' traditional and cultural ways of resolving children's problems, or assist the community to develop new ones if those that exist are inadequate to the new situation, or not in the best interest of the child.
- The program should support cohesion of families and communities, and where this is not possible; keep children with known persons, as this continuity is essential to human psychological, cognitive, and social development.
- Any program to address psychological well-being should be imbedded in programs that address social and community well-being, as the one is essential to the other. Psychological programs should not stand alone.
- Children and adolescents should, according to their growing capacity, be the key actors in the development of the program from the start. Competence and security are built on participation and activity --- watching others do, while sitting on the sidelines, leads to hopelessness and despair.
- Program inputs must be strictly monitored to insure that what we say we will do is actually done. (This enables a relationship with the community and with children based on a shared perception of reality.)
- A community based program of evaluation should accompany all programs to insure that the affected community is involved in deciding whether or not the program is effective and reorganizing aspects that are not.
- Daily school attendance helps school-aged children put structure and meaning into their lives. Emergency schools, run by local people, and operating on a regular schedule, should be implemented as soon as possible. Wherever possible, literate adolescents should assist with the creation and development of emergency schools.
- A market survey and study of economic development and livelihood indicators must accompany the development of vocational training programs in the non formal education sector. This will enable young people to learn usable skills that increase livelihood in the short term, and help with building the economy over time. Learning skills that do not increase livelihood, or drive down the price of skilled labour, can increase hopelessness.
While working in Binet's IQ test lab in Paris, Piaget became interested in how children think. He noticed that young children's answers were qualitatively different than older children which suggested to him that the younger ones were not dumber (a quantitative position since as they got older and had more experiences they would get smarter) but, instead, answered the questions differently than their older peers because they thought differently.

There are two major aspects to his theory: the process of coming to know and the stages we move through as we gradually acquire this ability.

**Process of Cognitive Development.** As a biologist, Piaget was interested in how an organism adapts to its environment (Piaget described as intelligence.) Behavior (adaptation to the environment) is controlled through mental organizations called schemes that the individual uses to represent the world and designate action. This adaptation is driven by a biological drive to obtain balance between schemes and the environment (equilibration).

Piaget hypothesized that infants are born with schemes operating at birth that he called "reflexes." In other animals, these reflexes control behavior throughout life. However, in human beings as the infant uses these reflexes to adapt to the environment, these reflexes are quickly replaced with constructed schemes.

Piaget described two processes used by the individual in its attempt to adapt: assimilation and accomodation. Both of these processes are used throughout life as the person increasingly adapts to the environment in a more complex manner.

Assimilation is the process of using or transforming the environment so that it can be placed in preexisting cognitive structures. Accomodation is the process of changing cognitive structures in order to accept something from the environment. Both processes are used simultaneously and alternately throughout life. An example of assimilation would be when an infant uses a sucking schema that was developed by sucking on a small bottle when attempting to suck on a larger bottle. An example of accomodation would be when the child needs to modify a sucking schema developed by sucking on a pacifier to one that would be successful for sucking on a bottle.

As schemes become increasingly more complex (i.e., responsible for more complex behaviors) they are termed structures. As one's structures become more complex, they are organized in a hierarchical manner (i.e., from general to specific).
**Stages of Cognitive Development.** Piaget identified four stages in cognitive development:

1. **Sensorimotor stage** (Infancy). In this period (which has 6 stages), intelligence is demonstrated through motor activity without the use of symbols. Knowledge of the world is limited (but developing) because it is based on physical interactions / experiences. Children acquire object permanence at about 7 months of age (memory). Physical development (mobility) allows the child to begin developing new intellectual abilities. Some symbolic (language) abilities are developed at the end of this stage.

2. **Pre-operational stage** (Toddler and Early Childhood). In this period (which has two substages), intelligence is demonstrated through the use of symbols, language use matures, and memory and imagination are developed, but thinking is done in a nonlogical, nonreversible manner. Egocentric thinking predominates.

3. **Concrete operational stage** (Elementary and early adolescence). In this stage (characterized by 7 types of conservation: number, length, liquid, mass, weight, area, volume), intelligence is demonstrated through logical and systematic manipulation of symbols related to concrete objects. Operational thinking develops (mental actions that are reversible). Egocentric thought diminishes.

4. **Formal operational stage** (Adolescence and adulthood). In this stage, intelligence is demonstrated through the logical use of symbols related to abstract concepts. Early in the period there is a return to egocentric thought. Only 35% of high school graduates in industrialized countries obtain formal operations; many people do not think formally during adulthood.

Many pre-school and primary programs are modeled on Piaget's theory, which, as stated previously, provides part of the foundation for constructivist learning. Discovery learning and supporting the developing interests of the child are two primary instructional techniques. It is recommended that parents and teachers challenge the child's abilities, but NOT present material or information that is too far beyond the child's level. It is also recommended that teachers use a wide variety of concrete experiences to help the child learn (e.g., use of manipulatives, working in groups to get experience seeing from another's perspective, field trips, etc).

Piaget's research methods were based primarily on case studies [they were descriptive]. While some of his ideas have been supported through more correlational and experimental methodologies, others have not. For example, Piaget believed that biological development drives the movement from one cognitive stage to the next. Data from cross-sectional studies of children in a variety of western cultures seem to support this assertion for the stages of sensorimotor, preoperational, and concrete operations.

However, data from cross-sectional studies of adolescents do not support the assertion that all individuals will automatically move to the next cognitive stage as they biologically mature. Data from adult populations provides essentially the same result: For formal operations, it appears that maturation establishes the basis, but a special environment is required for most adolescents and adults to attain this stage.
Piaget’s concepts:

A. **Adaptation** -- Piaget believed that humans desire a state of cognitive balance or equilibration. When the child experiences cognitive conflict (a discrepancy between what the child believes the state of the world to be and what s/he is experiencing) adaptation is achieved through assimilation or accommodation.

1. **Assimilation** involves incorporating new information into previously existing structures or schema (e.g., a child encounters a Dalmatian for the first time and incorporates Dalmatians into her existing schema for "dogs").

2. **Accommodation** involves the formation of new mental structures or schema when new information does not fit into existing structures (e.g., a child encounters a skunk for the first time and learns that it is different from "dogs" and "cats." She must create new representation for "skunks").

B. **Organization** refers to the mind’s natural tendency to organize information into related, interconnected structures. The most basic structure is the scheme.

C. Stages of Development -- Piaget proposed four stages of cognitive development: the sensorimotor period (0-2 yrs); the preoperational period (2-7 yrs); concrete operational period (7-11 yrs); formal operations (11-15 yrs). See the text (Solso, 1995) for further review.

D. Piaget maintains that development precedes learning. Development is stimulated by cognitive conflict.

II. Vygotsky -- Theoretical questions:

A. How is information from the external world transformed and internalized?

1. **Second Signal System** -- Vygotsky believed that we encode and represent our world through language.

   a. Language is a symbolic system by which we communicate.

   b. Language is a cultural tool. History and culture are transmitted through language.

   c. Our thoughts are based on language -- "inner speech"
2. Social Interaction plays an important role in the transformation and internalization processes.
   
a. social plane -- Vygotsky argued that development first takes place on a social plane. The child observes the parents' behaviour, listens to the parents' speech, and tries to imitate. The parents guide the child in his/her efforts, making corrections when needed and providing greater challenges when appropriate.

b. internal plane -- as the child becomes more competent information becomes internalized. For example, language is now represented in the mind as thought or inner speech.

B. Vygotsky also was interested in human intellectual development.

1. Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) -- " the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with a more capable peer" (in Bruner, 1986, p. 13).

   a. Scaffolding -- the process of guiding the learner from what is presently known to what is to be known. This occurs in the ZPD. The more competent person supports the learner in their endeavour to reach the new level of development.

   b. In contrast to Piaget, Vygotsky believed that instruction precedes development. Instruction leads the learner into the ZPD.

2. What is the role of language in cognitive development? Vygotsky believed that language has two purposes: communication and regulation:

   a. Communication is important in the transmission of culture and history between individuals.

   b. Regulation refers to one's control over one's own cognitive processes (e.g., thoughts, memory, etc.) A goal of development is to make the transition from being other-regulated to becoming self-regulated.
III. Some Differences Between Vygotsky and Piaget

A. Progression of Development

1. Piaget believed that development proceeds from the individual to the social world. Egocentric speech suggests that the child is self-centered and unable to consider the point-of-view of others. Piaget also maintains that development precedes learning.

2. Vygotsky believed that development begins at the social level and moves towards individual internalization. Egocentric speech is seen as a transition between the child's learning language in a social communicative context, and attempting to internalize it as "private" or "inner speech" (i.e., thoughts). For Vygotsky, learning precedes development.

3. Both agree that development may be initiated by cognitive conflict.

4. Like Piaget, Vygotsky believed that children's egocentric speech was an important part of their cognitive development. The two differed in how they viewed the purpose of egocentric speech.

References
