



TEACHER'S NOTES - Girls' Education in Conflict-Affected Countries

Note: This activity is written for Key Stage level 3. It is recommended that the lesson be read through thoroughly and modified as appropriate for Key Stage level 2.

UK Curriculum Links	
<p>ENGLAND (Citizenship)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Concepts: justice; human rights & responsibilities; diversity • Key Processes: critical thinking & enquiry; advocacy & representation; taking informed and responsible action • Range & content: the world as a global community 	<p>WALES (PSE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active citizenship • Sustainable development & global citizenship
<p>SCOTLAND (Citizenship)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global citizenship • Political awareness • Human rights • Equalities 	<p>NORTHERN IRELAND (Citizenship)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local & global citizenship • Diversity & inclusion • Equality & social justice • Human rights & responsibilities • Democracy & active participation

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson examines how conflict situations affect girls' access to education and culminates in a positive action that students can take to make a difference.

LESSON AIMS

- To show how girls and boys are affected differently by conflict
- To show the effects of conflict on girls education
- To learn how we can make a difference in children's lives all over the world

PREPARATION

- Copies of the activity sheets (included at the end of the lesson plan)
- One case study per group (included on activity sheet 2 at the end of the lesson plan)
- Postcards (will be sent to the school from Plan UK – email rachel.blain@plan-international.org to request these)



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STARTER

Begin the lesson by asking students for some examples of conflict situations. These may be simple 'at home' situations such as bullying, fighting on the playground, or not getting along with a brother or sister, through to war. The discussion should end with war, followed by a few facts about war:

1. When was the last war fought between armies on the ground in England?

Answer: 360 years ago.

2. Are more soldiers or civilians killed or injured in wars nowadays? Why do you think this is?

Answer: Civilians. Many years ago, wars were fought at close range and villages/towns were looted. However, since the development of modern air warfare, and rocket bombs, many more civilians are killed or injured.

(E.g. in WWI civilians accounted for 44% of casualties (6.6 million civilians), which rose to 65% in WW2 (47 million civilians). Today, up to 90% of casualties are civilians – increasingly women and children.)

MAIN ACTIVITY

Children in Conflict

What do you think life is like in a country that is at war? How do you think children are affected by war?

Possible answers include:

- Killed or injured
- Injuries to relations or close friends
- Captured or kidnapped
- Having to do the work of parents
- No school or training
- Little food
- Poor healthcare
- Child soldiers

Hand out **Activity Sheet 1**: Following the class discussion of possible effects of war, break into small groups to match the story with the consequence.

Think about it: Do you think girls are affected in the same way as boys? Why or why not?



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Girls' Education

What do all children need to grow up well? What would you want to grow up healthy and safe?

Possible answers:

- Secure family life / support of parents
- Good health services
- Good education
- Healthy food
- Freedom from discrimination

In conflict and war, many children grow up without these things. Girls usually have even less than boys. Why do you think girls might not be able to have these things?

As a class, briefly fill in the table below:

What is needed to grow up well?	What reasons might stop girls from enjoying these things?
Secure family life / support of parents	
Good health services	
Good education	
Healthy food	
Freedom from discrimination	

Now it is time to focus on education and what can be done to help girls. First, introduce some basic facts:

- An estimated 20 million girls are out of education in conflict affected countries
- In Somalia, a country that has been at war and had no government for 15 years, only 10% of girls go to school.
- In Liberia 80% of the schools that existed before the civil war started in 1989 were destroyed.



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Why Girls Don't Go to School

Education is one of the main needs for children, it is also a right that all children have. What are some of the reasons that girls do not receive an education?

Give each group a different case study (**found on Activity Sheet 2**) from a girl living in a conflict situation. Their job is to decide, based on the story they have, why the girl is not in school. At the end of the presentations, other reasons that may not have been mentioned should be discussed.

Reasons include:

- Violence in school
- Safety on the way there and distance from school
- Too expensive (fees, supplies, uniforms)
- Needed to do housework instead
- Take care of younger siblings
- Need to work
- No school available

Think or write about it: Why do you think education is so important for girls?

ACTION FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION

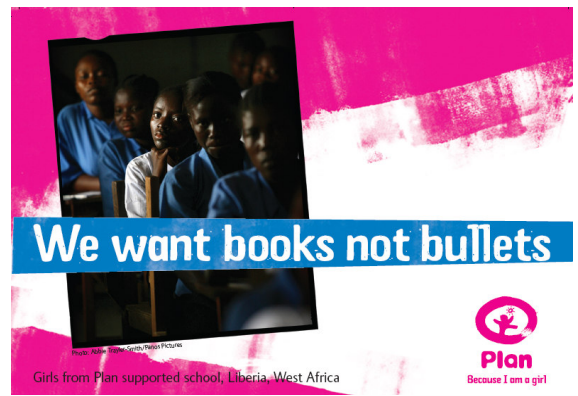
Going back to the beginning of the lesson, we now know that in times of conflict and war, girls suffer more than anyone else. Education is key to a girl's future, not only for herself, but also for her family and her community.

We've discussed the reasons why girls are not in school. Do you believe that you can make a difference? Let's think through some ways that we can help girls get an education.

ACTIVITY – POSTCARD TO GORDON BROWN

Hand out a **postcard** (see example below) to each student. Based on the previous discussion and any writing/thinking students have undertaken, ask them to draw or write a message on the postcard explaining why Gordon Brown should be giving more money to support girls' education in conflict affected countries.

[Might choose to discuss before this activity: What is campaigning? Pushing someone powerful to do something and make a change for an issue that you believe in. This postcard is one way that you can get involved in campaigning with Plan UK.]



Dear Mr Brown,
20 million girls in countries affected by war want to go to school like me.

Please keep your promise to them,
Yours sincerely,

Name: Age:

Charity registration number 276035

Personal Effects of War

Effects of war on children	Personal Stories
Little food, poor health care	<p>“Since my husband died I need to work outside the home and someone should stay at home to take care of the youngest children and I have no one but them.</p> <p>“It is sad to see my two girls losing their future like this but it is better than losing their lives.” Iraqi mother</p>
No school or training	<p>“My friend, Clare, a Catholic, was going out with someone from the British Army, until he was captured and stripped by the IRA, while Clare was made to watch. They told him that he would regret the day he ever laid a hand on one of ‘their’ girls.” Northern Irish young woman</p>
Taking over the role of parents	<p>“I was 11 when the rebels attacked our town in Liberia. I got separated from my parents and was captured. I stayed with the rebels for four years.” Young woman, Liberia</p>
Captured or kidnapped	<p>“I don’t have a future... I can’t write and I can’t read. But if I had the opportunity to read and write and be a student, I would want to learn to be a teacher – to teach the next generation.</p> <p>“I would like to send my children to school, even in wartime and in difficult times. I wish that Iraq could be the same as other countries, that children could live the same lives as other children...” 14-year-old Iraqi girl</p>

Why Girls Don't Go to School

What are some reasons why girls don't go to school? There may be more than one answer for each scenario.

Ask students to discuss it amongst themselves based on the case study for their group, and then to report back to the class after 5-10 minutes with the following information: what country the girl is from and why she cannot attend school.

Extend: What could be done to overcome this problem?

(Examples: She cannot attend school because it is too far away, so more schools should be built. She cannot attend school because she cannot afford it, so school should be free.)

Case Studies: (one per group)

1. "My father and mother are farmers – they cultivate other people's fields and then people pay them something. Our grandparents left a field for us but when they died, the rest of the family took the land back for themselves and my father was left with nothing. I was in the third year of primary school. I left because my father had no money to pay for me."
– **Girl, the Democratic Republic of Congo**
2. "We get up very early in the morning to do all the household work, while our brothers stay in bed until they are ready to have breakfast and go to school. We are like slaves for our brothers. In the morning, we go to school late because we have to do all the work at home before leaving. When we are late, we are beaten by the teachers. Sometimes I don't want to go school at all."
– **Girl, 15, Liberia**
3. "Most of the children in Afghanistan work on the streets. At the age when they should just study, they are forced to work and earn a living for their families."
– **Girl, 14, Afghanistan**
4. "Each morning, Jennifer wakes early to carry the heavy pot of cooked cassava she made the night before to market to be sold. With what she earns, she can barely pay the rent on her hut or feed herself and her younger brothers and sisters. But at 13, she heads the household because her parents were killed in the war in Northern Uganda, and every day she wonders how she will avoid abduction by rebels or if she will ever finish school."
– **Girl, Uganda**
5. "This year I was forced to take my two daughters out of school. The main reason is violence. I cannot have one of them killed or raped as has happened with many of their colleagues."
– **Mother, Iraq**