

UGANDA VOLUNTEERS FOR PEACE (UVP) is internationally recognised as a peace initiative organisation based in Uganda. UVP is among the NGOs who participated in the UNESCO programme 'Building Culture of Peace and non-violence in the Minds of Children (Ugandan Chapter) as a partner May 2002 - March 2003.

UNESCO (Group) launched this a worldwide campaign programme based on the manifesto 2000 which was drafted by Nobel Prize laureates which was signed by more than 74 million people with Presidents/Leaders from all over the world who committed themselves to the culture of peace in order to have the Global movement for peaceful, non- violence society.

The programme is sponsored by UNESCO (Culture Section) Paris and the National Commission for UNESCO Uganda office both finally and with the provision of materials and funds.

Objectives of the Consultation meeting 15th March –18th 2005 in UGANDA

1. Discuss the factors/issues that contribute to violence and conflict;
2. Identifying gaps and opportunities to improve to the programme, and
3. Develop methods to incorporate changes and way forward.

Programme Background

- ◆ The programme co-ordinators reviewed various conflicts in Africa and concluded that children between the ages of 4-12 years need to be sensitised on issues of peace, conflict and violence.
- ◆ The Building Culture of Peace and Non Violence in the minds of children by UNESCO's Culture of Peace Section was established in 2001 and is operational till 2010.
- ◆ The programme is co-funded by UNESCO in Paris and the Bread for the World in Germany through DED (Offices) for PEACE –EDUCATION.
- ◆ During 2002-2003, the programme identified trainers and undertook a series of outreach seminars to schools located across Uganda.
- ◆ Each seminar consisted of talks and awareness raising through games and pictures.
- ◆ Each session concluded with the submission of questionnaire evaluations and each school was encouraged to develop their own peace camp/clubs.
- ◆ Follow-up sessions were arranged, but the co-ordinators found that the schools had not undertaken or developed their own activities.

Factors and Issues that Contribute to Violence and Conflict

1. **Social**

- *Parenting behaviour* – does the parent treat all children the same? For example, in a Ugandan family where a man may have several wives and a number of children by each wife, there may be competition for attention and affection between the children. The parents' approach to discipline may also affect a child's behaviour. For example, a child who is beaten may only understand violence as a method of resolving their problems.
- *Individual and child empowerment* – is the child passive and therefore accepts violence as an approach to discipline or is the child aware of the dangers of violence and has the capacity to promote peaceful solutions to conflicts. Are parents and community members aware of their rights and the consequences of their actions? Are children, parents and community members being given the time and space to encourage their self-growth and development.
- *Marriage* – the equality in decision making between husband and wife. The approaches employed by parents in resolving the conflicts between themselves can influence the child's perception of conflict resolution.
- *Education* – how the child is disciplined at school will also influence the child's attitude to conflict resolution. The method in which the child is taught may either empower the child to learn and develop or it may encourage the child to feel ashamed and concede to violence as a form of expression. All schools should be encouraged to teach peace keeping and conflict resolution skills.
- *Social circle (peer pressure)* – the behaviour of *children* as well as adults are influenced by their peers and at certain ages this influence plays a crucial role in the development of an individual. The attitude of peers toward violence, peace and conflict resolution will need to be taken into account when developing approaches targeting children.
- *Religion* – differences in religious beliefs may incite conflict and the religious needs of individuals should be taken into account when organising conflict resolution programmes, for example, the time of the sessions, the food provided, the topics discussed and the method of presentation.

2. **Economical**

- *Differences in wealth between families and community members* – differences in wealth can encourage crime because it can create a desire for material wealth and the want for attention.
- *Poverty circle* - can hamper programmes for conflict resolution as a family's priorities may be focused on survival and this may not provide the time and opportunity for the children to attend school or develop their skills. Poverty can also reinforce dependency attitudes on certain members of the community and therefore restrict their empowerment.
- *Unemployment levels* – competition to secure jobs can create conflicts between individuals in a community and also influences the household income and expenditure. Unemployment can also cause frustration, affect an individual's self esteem and create tension between family members.

- *International trading* – the dependency culture created by international trading systems has a great impact on the income of farming communities in Uganda. The loss of an individual's control on pricing of their produce greatly impacts on household income and expenditure and can reinforce the poverty cycle.

3. Cultural

- *Traditions* – cultural traditions can reinforce conflict, for example tribal conflict, family feuds, attitudes towards women and children and also harmful traditions such as female genital mutilation and male circumcision can also create tensions within families and communities.
- *Foreign Influence* – the cultural influence from abroad can encourage violence, spread messages of hate towards some members of the community and can create a culture of wanting materials and wealth.
- *Gender Balance* – the gender inequality in decision making within homes and within the community reinforces the subordination of women. This makes it difficult for women to be empowered and to be fully involved in building the capacity of peace and conflict resolution.

4. Political

- *International Politics* – International conflicts can reinforce differences between community members and create local conflict. Images of war and patriotism can also incite hatred within community members.
- *Government Policies and Attitudes* – the government may need to strengthen its commitment to peace and ensure that they provide an appropriate communication channel to hear the needs of the most vulnerable members of society.
- *Child Soldiers* – the needs of child soldiers are unique to their experiences and the government and NGOs should ensure that appropriate counselling and support is provided to them. Many of these children have been taken from their homes and forced into war crimes. Others have left home to join armies as a form of revenge for the loss of family members.
- *Age Consent for Sex* – the age consent for sex is a peace issue as many young girls can become mothers by the age of 14 and their childrearing approach may influence the behaviour of the child. Young mothers can also be shunned from their families and this can cause family conflicts and financial hardship for the mother.
- *Corruption* – with many forms of money laundering and many elements of crime, conflict and power struggles can arise.

5. Historical

- *Country Conflicts* – previous war crimes and conflicts have created divisions within communities and these experiences need to be addressed if conflict resolution is to be productive.
- *Family* – historical conflicts within families can continue if they are not tackled. Violence within families can also be attributed to previous physical abuse of parents.
- *Tribal Conflicts* – these have caused divisions within communities and if these conflicts are not addressed the underlying problems will persist.

Vision

The peaceful resolution of conflicts

Aims

Improve the quality of the lives of children, parents and communities through empowerment and grassroots development.

Strategies discussed

- Training parents and teachers to counsel children.
- Using peer peace educators to access vulnerable children and to provide a friendly child centred approach to engaging children.
- Effective sensitisation of parents through participatory techniques, for example Music, drama and dance.
- Understanding community needs and issues
- Income generating activities – micro-finance. Co-operatives
- Volunteer training - agricultural methods, technology, local and international
- Education of child rights of conflicts resolution - targeting both in school and out of school.

Way Forward

- Training of trainers for child/parent councillors. Training of special skills in peace and conflict resolution. This will be undertaken in schools and communities.
- Effective sensitisation of parents/children/communities through participatory techniques e.g. drama, dance, music, film and media.
- Income generating activities - micro credit, co-operatives at the grassroots level.
- Monitoring and evaluation of performance and regular follow-up. The information should also be disseminated to other organisations dedicated to the promotion of
- culture of Peace in third world countries ,Governments, International Agencies, Unesco,Churches, NGOs,CBOs and the Global Movement for Children should share this information and give their own comments as a way forward and for the purpose implementation of the Programme to 2010 as planned by UNESCO (Culture section) in Paris.

The above factors have been categorised together, however no one factor can be dealt with in isolation and for effective resolution a holistic approach is required.