

Helpdesk Report: Psycho-social activities in education in emergencies

Date: 20 July 2011

Query: What is the evidence that psycho-social activities in education in emergency contexts help children in their education?

Enquirer: DFID Sudan

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1. Overview

The EFA Global Monitoring Report for 2011 focuses on education in emergencies and recognises the importance of psycho-social interventions in addressing the negative effects of conflict, including depression, trauma, shame and withdrawal, that have devastating consequences for learning. However, there is little evidence regarding the impact of activities on their education. Very few studies show a direct improvement in education outcomes after a psycho-social intervention, whether school or community-based.¹ However, an increasing (yet still small) number of studies of school-based psycho-social interventions demonstrate improvements that could impact on educational outcomes indirectly, through, for example reduced anxiety, a sense of structure and meaning in the individual's life, improved self-esteem and improved relationship with teachers.

The potential protective elements of education in emergencies:²

- gives children an identity as students, averts inadequacy felt by children out of school
- provides a venue for expression through play and cultural activities such as sports, music, drama, and art
- facilitates social integration of vulnerable children such as separated children and former combatants
- supports social networks and community interaction for children and their families

1 Exceptions include Melvin 2005, Chitiyo et al 2008, Layne et al 2001, Gupta and Zimmer 2008 – summarised below.

2 The Role Of Education in Protecting Children in Conflict, HPN Network Paper by Nicolai and Triplehorn, 2003

- provides a daily routine and offers a sense of the future beyond the immediacy of war or conflict.

Yet there is little consensus regarding what constitutes a psycho-social activity. In terms of school-based programmes the label 'psycho-social programming' has been used to refer to ongoing structured activities combining creative and psychotherapy activities to different degrees, safe spaces for play and recreation, sensitising teachers to the needs of conflict affected young people, bringing trained counsellors in to schools to conduct a series of focused sessions, or in fact identifying and referring problems outside the school. Schools are often thought of as good places for psycho-social programmes because they can potentially access many children of different ages and in different contexts, as well as draw on existing resources and because schools supposedly offer a stigma free environment, however, there is little consistency in goals and approaches. It is also difficult to get schools to support new approaches when teachers are already overwhelmed.

The studies show that:

- Keeping schools open and accessible is a key psycho-social response.
- Safe play programmes can help children normalise their behaviour through play with their peers, particularly if they have been displaced. Training youth leaders to run activities has shown to improve their self-worth.
- Running activities in schools with distinct psychological recovery components (with creative and skills components as well) can reach many children and has had positive outcomes such as improving children's concentration in schools, increasing their feelings of security and reducing symptoms of trauma.
- Teacher sensitisation programmes can help children come to terms with psychological and social problems. However, success is dependent on the education system's ability to support its teachers (including good quality training and professional feedback and support).
- Having specialised counsellors work with individuals and groups of severely affected children and youth has proven to be effective, but only when these efforts have been implemented in cultures that traditionally use mental health interventions and in schools which are part of functional education systems.
- Interventions should be specific to the needs presented and draw on local traditions and resources.

Gaps in the research include:

- a focus on the specific experiences of girls
- confirmatory studies using a control group
- cost-effectiveness and comparative advantage analysis of psycho-social programmes
- including a range of outcomes (including education outcomes) to provide more conclusive evidence of the impacts of interventions
- combining quantitative and qualitative research to show the psycho-social progress of those attending programmes.

Challenges include the following:

- The specific circumstances in which people live make generalisations difficult.
- There is a lack of capacity and understanding of the context among agencies to implement such programmes during and after conflict.
- It is difficult for evaluations to attribute positive changes to actual programmes and their specific elements.
- The limited resources available during times of conflict and post-conflict make implementing and sustaining programmes hard.

2. Useful overviews texts

Towards Best Practice in School-Based Psychosocial Programming: A Survey of Current Approaches

Neil Boothby and Charles H. Melvin

Program on Forced Migration and Health, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, 2007
http://www.cpcnetwork.org/admin/includes/doc_view.php?ID=460

Wide-scale exposure of children to violence and deprivation has resulted in efforts to provide psycho-social support to war-affected and displaced children through schools. While some of these efforts proved to be effective, others have not.

There are six main approaches to the provision of psycho-social support to war-affected children through schools. The type of research that would allow for comparative impact conclusions has not been undertaken. However, there is emerging evidence in the form of case studies, programme evaluations, a few impact studies, and other field-based findings that point to promising trends and lay the foundation for subsequent research and programme learning opportunities.

1. Keeping schools open and accessible is a key psycho-social response. In recognition of this the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) developed a set of standards to guide educational efforts in war and refugee situations. A study of Palestinian children demonstrated the importance of school life to children despite the significant affects of conflict on standards. However it is hard to provide adequate schooling, and for children to access school in conflict situations and they can also be sights of abuse and conflict.
2. Recreation and structured activities have helped large numbers of children 'normalise' their behaviour after exposure to violence or flight. Safe Play programmes provide a mechanism to monitor child protection concerns in difficult and dangerous environments as demonstrated by a programme in Tanzania for Rwandan refugees.
3. Some agencies have developed classroom-based initiatives with distinct psychological recovery components. One of the advantages of this approach is that entire classrooms are selected for participation, thereby helping to 'destigmatise' mental health interventions in schools. A programme for children in the West Bank indicated significant differences between those that experienced the intervention and those that did not in terms of self-esteem, self-efficacy, pro-social behaviour and post-traumatic stress symptoms.
4. Teacher sensitisation programmes seek to provide teachers with knowledge and skills to help children in their classrooms come to terms with psychological and social wounds. In Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, and Palestine, where the educational structures are advanced compared to those in most war affected countries, research has found that such programmes resulted in modest improvements in the psycho-social status of children. The success of these efforts, however, is highly dependent on the education system's ability to support its teachers. New strategies are required to support these frontline workers in fragile or failed states.
5. Peer-to-peer dialogue has been employed in schools with some success. Although these discussion leaders have too little training to be regarded as professional counsellors, peer dialogues appear to be useful psycho-social tools since they build important life skills.³
6. Several programmes to support school-based counsellors' work with individuals and groups of severely affected children and youth have proven to be effective, but only when these efforts have been implemented in cultures that traditionally use mental health interventions and in schools which are part of functional education systems.

Psychosocial Adjustment and Social Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups: The State of the Field and Future Directions

Betancourt, T., Borisova, I., Rubin-Smith, J., Gingerich, T., Williams, T. and Agnew-Blais, J.
Austin, Tex., Psychology Beyond Borders, 2008

<http://psychologybeyondborders.com/userfiles/file/RPCGA%20CAAFAG%20REPORT%20FINAL%20JULY%202008.pdf>

The report reviews the current state of the field on the psycho-social adjustment, mental health and wellbeing of former child soldiers. The first part of the report reviews what is currently known about the

³ A few studies focused on interventions that trained youth leaders to work with younger children. They are not generally included in this query because they had no link with educational facilities. The greatest impact seemed to be on the self-esteem of the youth leaders themselves.

effects of children's participation in armed forces on their psychological, economic and social wellbeing. The second part of the report focuses on two main paradigms that dominate the field of service delivery for war-affected youth: the psycho-social approach and the clinical/psychiatric approach. A brief review of evaluations on the efficacy of mental health interventions for war-affected youth, which have implications for former child soldiers, includes the UNICEF project in Sierra Leone (summarised in section 3, Alexander 2006).

Services and programmatic recommendations include:

- Holistic, integrated systems of care are needed for *all* war-affected youth.
- The false dichotomy between psycho-social and clinical mental health responses for war-affected children should end. Both approaches can make significant contributions to the care of war-affected youth and should be used in tandem.
- Particular steps must be taken to ensure that war-affected girls, particularly those who were child soldiers, are provided with the appropriate social and economic supports to ensure healthy reintegration.
- Service systems should capitalise on indigenous supportive responses and capacities.
- Training of local staff cannot be implemented without commensurate attention to developing mechanisms for routine supervision and professional development of local staff.
- Psycho-social responses and mental health care are most effective when integrated with other service systems such as schools and primary care.
- Child protective services and social welfare systems are also important and provide a social safety net for extremely disadvantaged families in regions impacted by conflict.
- Investments must be made in evaluating both the implementation and the outcomes of psycho-social and mental health services.

Systematic Review of Evidence and Treatment Approached: Psychosocial and Mental Health Care for Children in War

Jordans, M., Tol, W., Komproe, I., V.T.M. de Jong, J.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Volume 14, No. 1, 2009, pp. 2–14

Researchers collected 97 articles to assess whether interventions alleviated psycho-social ailments in children and whether there is enough evidence-based data yet produced to make such an informed decision. Conclusions:

- There is a general lack of evidence for the efficiency and effectiveness of certain interventions.
- The majority of articles illustrated positive outcomes of interventions but generally lacked scientific vigour.
- There is a diversity of treatment modalities that makes it difficult to pin point the most effective intervention however the consensus seems to be in multi-levelled community based approaches. Creative-expressive techniques are the most commonly reported.
- Studies are overly skewed to a narrow focus on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms.
- The field at large seems to have moved away from a narrow disorder-specific focus to general wellbeing, mild distress, and psychopathology. However, there is a lack of developed theory for the latter.
- Future efforts should be more theory driven and develop clear paradigms for dealing with psycho-social and mental health care for children.

The psychosocial aspects of children exposed to war: practice and policy initiatives

Joshua Barenbau et al

Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, Volume 45, Issue 1, pages 41–62, January 2004

The authors review existing literature and summarise psycho-social approaches for helping war-affected children, and suggest future directions for research and policy.

In school-based interventions the initial goal is to create an emotionally safe and friendly environment while incorporating mental health interventions. Schools and other public services can help monitor children's adjustment and level of coping, and can facilitate the provision of professional help when it is needed. Teachers have the important task of supporting and understanding students. They can also

facilitate discussions about the war and have opportunities to reinforce coping skills, correct rumours, identify suffering children, and prepare students for future experiences. Several NGOs have implemented the practice of training of trainers, which involves a short-term training of community members and teachers in basic skills of psycho-social intervention and alleviation of distress. These helpers need ready access to professional feedback and consultation, and the planning and expectations about their work should be gauged in light of the amount of training they obtain.

Additional conclusions:

- Former child soldiers may need special classes if they have fallen behind in classes or experience significant trauma.
- School-based educational programmes should teach peace education and reconciliation, in order to promote the culture of peace in children.

Untapped Potential: Adolescents affected by armed conflict, a review of programs and policies

New York, US Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2004

http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/adolescents_armed_conflict.pdf

The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children conducted this study to determine patterns and practices regarding the health, education, livelihood, protection and psychological and social needs of adolescents uprooted by armed conflict. It is a review of programmes and policies for adolescent refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees. In addition to identifying past, current and upcoming initiatives, this report identifies gaps in programming, ongoing needs and future challenges.

The following elements are essential to psycho-social programming on behalf of war-affected adolescents: tracing and family reunification; building on the strengths, resiliency and constructive coping mechanisms of the community, including those of adolescents themselves; taking adolescents' cultural context into account; combining Western methods of healing with traditional practices, such as healing rituals; focusing on prevention; providing educational and recreational opportunities as soon as possible in emergency responses. Additional research is needed regarding the psycho-social impact of war on adolescents and the cultural context which contributes to the meaning they attach to their suffering and the responses they find most effective.

Case studies on psycho-social interventions in conflict settings show the following:

- Teenagers were recruited and trained as community youth promoters (CYPs) in Ixil Guatemala, focusing on psychological healing and support for younger out-of-school children and families through organising activities for them, recreational, educational and therapeutic in nature. While none of the CYPs were in school when the project began, 40% began attending either primary or secondary grades. The remainder became involved in a variety of vocational and non-formal education programmes.
- In Davao City, Negros, the community decided to set up a school where young children could play, socialise and maintain a sense of normalcy amidst their dislocation. The pre-school covered play therapy, basic literacy, health education, disaster preparedness, child literacy, rights of children and peace-making. The adolescents, who served as child trainers, gained life skills and respect in the community. The schoolchildren became less aggressive and experiencing new hope.
- The Children and War (CAW) project, run by Save the Children from 1989 to 1994, addressed the problems of refugee and internally displaced children from Mozambique in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, who were traumatised by war and separated from their parents. The project had two components: family reunification and after-school programmes. Adolescents were trained as *activistas* who facilitated dance, music, sports and other activities for younger children and acted as mentors; and as participants in skills training. Involving adolescents in constructive activities improved their self-esteem, helped their psychological and social adjustment from the trauma of war, eased the process of relocation and prepared them to be more productive citizens upon their return.

Promoting Psycho-social Well-Being Among Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Displacement: Principles and Approaches

Working Group on Children Affected by Armed Conflict and Displacement, International Save the Children Alliance, 1996

<http://repository.forcedmigration.org/pdf/?pid=fmo:3758>

The paper also provides background information on the psychological and social effects of warfare on children, presents an overview of existing programmes and suggests principles and approaches for improving programmes and interventions. Such principles include applying a long-term perspective that incorporates the psycho-social wellbeing of children; adopting a community-based approach that encourages self-help and builds on local culture, realities and perceptions of child development; promoting normal family and everyday life so as to increase children's resiliency; focusing on primary care and the prevention of further harm; and providing support as well as training for personnel who care for children.

3. Multifaceted programmes

A number of programmes combine psycho-social activities.

The IRC's emergency education programme for Chechen children and adolescents

Theresa Stichick Betancourt, Rebecca Winthrop, Wendy Smith and Gillian Dunn

Forced Migration Review, Issue 15, October 2002

<http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR15/fmr15.12.pdf>

IRC started its emergency education programme in January 2000 with non-formal education and recreation activities in 11 spontaneous settlements for Chechen refugees in the Republic of Ingushetia. The goal was to provide structured activities for the large numbers of displaced children and youth and to build the capacity of the displaced community to respond to the needs of their children. During the first phase, the programme provided:

- funding to secure education supplies and space for make-shift schools
- training for displaced Chechen teachers on how to address the complex challenges of working with few resources and overcrowded or multi-age classrooms
- recreation activities such as inter-camp theatre groups, and
- encouraged youth leadership and parent participation in programme planning and implementation.

A longitudinal study of the impact of the programme on Chechen adolescents focused on the degree to which IRC's emergency education programme helped achieve psycho-social goals such as increasing social supports for the Chechen youth and alleviating psychological and social strains that they experienced. The study measured participating adolescents' emotional and behavioural distress and factors that contributed to this stress as well as protective factors such as social support from (and connectedness with) family, friends and significant others, as well as their perceptions of the education programme.

Chechen adolescents suffered from many emotional and environmental factors that put them at risk and hindered a healing process - the difficulty of living in tents or abandoned buildings, the infrequency of food, medicines and educational materials and concern for their parents. They are unable to fulfil their simple desire to 'live like other kids' and participate in simple play, school or community activities. They struggle with being a 'guest' in Ingushetia and are torn between gratitude to the Ingush for taking them in and frustration at the teasing or harassment from local youth or authorities. Some report concern that they are being 'idle' and 'wasting time' when they should be supporting their families.

Before the programme started young people had tried to organise their own activities to enjoy the company of fellow teenagers, but encountered resistance from adults, offended by the sight of young people having 'fun' amidst the hardship of displacement. Many young people had lost their homes and their sense of a 'place' to return to. When asked about what was most important, many spoke of the importance of having a 'place' to anchor themselves during this transition.

Chechen youth see the education programme as 'helping' by returning young people to their studies as well as giving children a safe and reliable place to go and an emotional space to turn their thoughts

towards more age-appropriate concerns. Young people need a place to 'forget about the war' and they also need a place to be 'understood'. Relationships between teachers, youth leaders and peers in the education programme were discussed as a potential source of assistance and informational support when parental time for children was unavailable. The education programme provides a place for children to connect to others, gain social support and offer hope for a better future. Youth leaders reported that participating in leadership roles in the programme influenced their own sense of themselves, their ability to help others and their thoughts about future career choices.

Initially the IRC-supported emergency education schools placed little emphasis on formal education because so many children were behind in their schooling, texts and teaching materials were still few, teachers needed training and the programme needed to coordinate with the Ingush Ministry of Education to ensure future formalisation and accreditation. This created stress among adolescents that contradicted the desire of many adolescents for legitimacy and normalcy. Adolescents wanted formal schooling situations and testing opportunities legitimised by local education officials. This has led IRC to move more rapidly to formal education in this and other programmes.

The research also revealed that the more adolescents perceived their relationships with their families as close, caring and respectful, the better their mental health. Organisations working in emergency education need to encourage parents and extended family to participate in education through family-student-teacher discussion groups, school-based health activities or community education committees.

This study is also described in:

Stressors, Supports and the Social Ecology of Displacement: Psychosocial Dimensions of an Emergency Education Program for Chechen Adolescents Displaced in Ingushetia, Russia

Theresa Stichick Betancourt

Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry, Volume 29, Number 3, 309-340, 2005

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/f6l48r404r72j128/>

Emergency Education and Psychosocial Support Programming for Eritrean Refugees in Ethiopia

International Rescue Committee, Internet Forum on Conflict Prevention, 2002.

<http://www.theirc.org/resource-file/emergency-education-and-psychosocial-support-programming-eritrean-refugees-ethiopia>

This case study examines an Emergency Education Program implemented by the IRC for Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia. Started as a pilot project in 2001, this education programme provided:

- non-formal education activities, including, Tigrigna, English, Amharic, maths, environmental science, social studies, science, arts, physical education and music
- youth recreational activities: handicraft, sports, games, cultural clubs
- training of community teachers and youth leaders with a focus on child protection and psychosocial care
- building and/or strengthening community awareness and advocacy for children and adolescents through formation and training of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Community Committees charged with identifying and working with vulnerable groups.

The programme was developed by the IRC in close coordination with the refugee community members, UNHCR and the Ethiopian government agencies. Monitoring reports were predominantly based on qualitative assessment rather than quantitative analysis.

The programme was proven to have positive impacts:

- It helped children cope with the trauma and loss resulting from conflict and displacement, inferred from the stability and sense of normality that resulted from structured activities in the educational setup.
- Involving the refugee community at every stage of the programme increased their capacity and capability to take on responsibility for the project.
- Training benefited all those involved, (teachers, youth leaders, as well as members of the PTAs and school committees).
- The relationship between refugees and the host community is positive. Some parents send their

children to the refugee school, or participate in youth activities organised in the camp.

Review of the former Soviet embassy compound IDP camp: psychosocial support activities, Kabul Afghanistan

L. Arnston / United Nations [UN] Children's Fund, 2001

<http://www.forcedmigration.org/psychosocial/inventory/pwg003/>

This report is a retrospective review of approximately 14 months of psycho-social support activities that began in October 1999 in the Kabul camp for internally-displaced persons (IDPs) in the former Soviet Union embassy compound. The psycho-social support activities were funded by UNICEF and implemented by Save the Children/US. In January and February of 2001, household survey and focus group data were collected, transcribed, and translated for this review.

The psycho-social support activities aimed to involve the IDP community in improving the sense of security, regularity, and order in the lives of children, youth, mothers/care-givers, and families housed in the camp, and in this way reinforce the psycho-social wellbeing of children to mitigate the effects of war and its aftermath. A significant part of this restoration of normality involved re-creating social networks, safe places to play, and the self-competency that comes with valued roles, skills, and choice. The educational opportunities and structured daily activities provided in the IDP camp aimed to promote a nurturing and stable environment for children and youth and encouraged healthy physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of children.

Due to their displacement, subsequent absence of traditional agricultural activities, and the restrictions and close watch imposed by Taliban authorities, male youth in particular needed something to occupy their free time and build their sense of self-esteem and engagement in the community. Perhaps the most vulnerable population in the camp, when it comes to feeling isolated and hopeless, would be pre-adolescent and adolescent girls because of restrictions to their mobility in addition to the new socio-political environment.

The activities initiated in response to these needs included:

- formal education in language, math, and religion for boys and girls of school age
- home-based vocational activities for older (pre-adolescent and adolescent) girls
- home visits aimed at providing knowledge about child health care for women with children under five years of age
- playgrounds for different age groups
- sports grounds for older boys
- facilitation of a youth sports committee

Overall, the psycho-social support programme was successful in that it provided opportunities for building resilience, a sense of self-esteem and competency, and skills among IDP children, youth, mothers/care-givers, and families in the Kabul camp. This review of the psycho-social support programme was able to identify progress toward: building social support networks, especially for mothers and adolescent girls; increasing access to health information and services; increasing educational opportunities for primary school-age children; and encouraging a positive outlook toward the future.

Key recommendations resulting from this review include:

- Involving fathers, brothers, and other male kin in the camp more actively in programme activities. This might include: involving men in education promotion by providing them with basic training in early childhood development and peaceful conflict resolution skills; and enlisting their help in the upkeep of the school and recreational/play spaces.
- Organising additional recreational activities, such as inclusive, large, non-competitive games and expanding the youth sports committees to take on other youth recreational activities.
- Mobilising mothers/care-givers into groups for pre-school and play opportunities for children.

Community Based Reintegration: Programme Evaluation

Alexander, J., New York: UNICEF, 2006

UNICEF's Community-Based Reintegration (CBR) programme in Sierra Leone (working with local and international partners) sought to provide educational and psycho-social support to demobilised children, and to establish and support community-based child protection systems in all districts of the country. At the community level, the CBR included Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), composed of local leaders, teachers, women and youth representatives who assisted with family tracing.

CWCs also followed up with children in their homes, schools and children's clubs and promoted sensitisation on children's rights issues within the community. At the peer level, Children's Clubs (CCs) offered recreational and educational opportunities to all children within the community. At the family level, the CBR provided follow-up and monitoring services in homes and schools. Social workers monitored former child soldiers in these settings. A number of educational and vocational initiatives were also a part of the CBR. For instance, Community Education Investment Program (CEIP) Schools were established in programme sites. School fees were waived for demobilised children and they were provided with a uniform, bag and other school supplies.

The CBR model also included a number of Complimentary Rapid Education Primary Schools (CREPS) that offered a compressed primary school programme designed for older children. Finally, the CBR programme included skills training and apprenticeship programmes. These interventions were supported by curricula developed with trainers and social workers to ensure proper monitoring and skills development.

Over five years of implementation 7,204 former child soldiers entered the CBR programme. An assessment conducted in 2006 compared CBR beneficiaries to a control group. They found beneficiaries to be more optimistic about the future, to show greater self-confidence, and to be more involved in school groups than children who did not go through the programme. The two groups were not statistically different in terms of school attendance, substance abuse, or involvement in paid work.

4. Child-centred spaces

Example⁴ of a Safe Space programme described in:

Towards Best Practice in School-Based Psychosocial Programming: A Survey of Current Approaches

Neil Boothby and Charles H. Melvin

Program on Forced Migration and Health, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, 2007

http://www.cpcnetwork.org/admin/includes/doc_view.php?ID=460

The humanitarian response to refugees in the aftermath of Rwanda's genocide provides an example of how Safe Space programmes laid the foundation for refugee education and a wider range of community support programmes. It is also a case study of how the absence of Safe Space programmes may undermine efforts to monitor child protection concerns.

In the spring of 1994, 250,000 Hutus fled to Tanzania in a single day to escape the repercussions of their leaders (and in many cases their own) involvement in the genocide in Rwanda. In a matter of weeks, 30-40,000 children were organised into Safe Space programmes, with each group of children engaging in about 3 hours of structured activities per day. A 'school-in-a-box' literary and numeracy programme was added to this initial effort, providing children with a short-term learning opportunity, as well as more structure to their day. These two psycho-social first-phase emergency responses paved the way for a more formal refugee education programme and other community-based psycho-social support efforts.

In contrast, in Goma (Zaire), a cholera epidemic and rocky, overcrowded terrain, impeded the provision of Safe Spaces for children. Moreover, UNHCR did not actively support education at all for refugee children.

4 The information for this study was given to the author in a personal communication – they are not named.

Many Hutus who had orchestrated and participated in the genocide (including teachers, headmasters and ministers) had fled to Zaire. UNHCR believed that these Hutu Power members, who already dominated the refugee camps, would use education and structured activities programmes to continue to flame ethnic hatred and revenge.

The absence of Safe Space and education programmes indirectly contributed to the large scale use of under-aged refugee boys to continue to kill Rwandan civilians. UN security personnel observed large numbers of teenage boys leaving refugee camps in favour of military camps in nearby mountains where they were trained as guerrilla combatants and used in nightly raids back into Rwanda. Had Safe Space and education programmes existed, the recruitment of children from refugee camps could have been monitored, reported and (possibly) acted upon. Safe Space programmes can provide needed psycho-social support as well as structures to monitor day-to-day protection concerns.

Assessment of CCF's Emergency Entry Program into Afghanistan: It's Impact on Child Well-Being and Protection

Dr. Leslie Snider and Carl Triplehorn for Christian Children's Fund (CCF), April 2003

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/AEE6B74580699E2B4925759400066977-Full_Report.pdf

The main focus of CCF's emergency response programme in Afghanistan was the rapid implementation and scale-up of child protection and psycho-social support. From CCF's entry into Afghanistan in December 2001, child-centred spaces (CCS) were initiated for more than 12,000 children over a wide geographic area within 3 months of programme operations. Permanent staff continued the scale up and refine programmes, so that within 6 months of operations, more than 21,000 children, youth and adults were benefiting from CCS and literacy activities. The programme promoted the children's psycho-social recovery by providing children with daily structured formal and non-formal educational activities and support in a physically safe environment.

Impacts:

- Both community members and CCS teachers underscored the importance of CCS activities in resocialising children to the norms and values of peaceful Afghan society.
- Wide implementation of CCS activities in the north-eastern provinces improved access to education for children, providing many with their first opportunity to attend school. Incorporation of formal and informal education in CCSs provided a framework for educational approaches to children's development including art, sports, cultural values, health and hygiene, in addition to maths, reading and writing. Literacy classes provided educational opportunities to youth, including young women, and to adults, providing them skills to improve their home life, livelihood and care of their children. CCSs prepared both children and teachers for re-entering the school environment.
- Training of teachers for CCS and literacy courses raised their capacity through new skills in teaching methodologies and lesson planning, gave them confidence to return to teaching and re-enter the workforce, and sensitised them to the holistic needs of children in fostering their healthy development. CCS teachers were able to carry knowledge about children's psycho-social, hygiene and recovery needs both to their own homes and to their work in formal schools when they re-opened.
- CCF programmes also significantly supported the building of the local, formal school system through material distribution, teacher training and ongoing supervision, school rehabilitation and cooperation with the Ministry of Education in primary school and adult literacy curricula development.
- CCF enabled the transition to formal schooling in their communities, ensuring that their programmes did not compete with the opening of government schools, and enhanced the formal school system.
- The CCS programmes engaged the communities around the needs of their children, and communities actively assisted the identification and preparation of CCS spaces for school activities.

Assessing Afghan Children's Psychosocial Well-Being: A Multi-Modal Study of Intervention

Outcomes⁵

Loughry, M., Macmullin, C., Eyber, C. Abebe, B., Ager, A., Kostelny, K., Wessells, M., Psychosocial Working Group Secretariat, Christians Children's Fund, Queen Margaret University College, February 11, 2005

http://www.forcedmigration.org/psychosocial/papers/afghan_report_ccf_ox_qmuc.pdf

The psycho-social and child protection programme consisted of Child Centred Spaces and activities facilitated by Child Wellbeing Committees. Staffed by local people, Child Centred Spaces provided non-formal education together with expressive activities. The CCSs aimed to provide a sense of safety and structure and to enable children's participation in normalising and expressive activities that help children come to terms with their war experiences. But do they work?

Between 2003-2004, researchers in Northern Afghanistan conducted a comparison of children and adult caregivers in order to construct a quantitative scale to measure Afghan children's psycho-social wellbeing and the effectiveness of the Child Fund Afghanistan's (CFA) intervention programme. Subjects were selected via stratified random sample using criteria of willingness to participate, ethnic diversity, and rough equivalence in how severely they had been affected by violent and non-violent conflict. The questionnaire reflected local understanding and focused on feelings, relationships, and coping.

The research did not decide the question whether water and sanitation or psycho-social interventions had greater impact. Whereas the quantitative data indicated that the water and sanitation intervention had greater impact, the qualitative data indicated that both interventions had value. Children identified specific ways in which the psycho-social intervention had increased their wellbeing such as a reduction in beatings by teachers, which had been a major source of distress. Also, the girls had become more outspoken about their situation. However, it is impossible to rule out the influence of factors other than CFA psycho-social interventions.

The Protection and Psychosocial Well-Being of Young Children Following Armed Conflict: Outcome Research on Child-Centered Spaces in Northern Uganda

Kostelny, K., Wessells, M.,

The Journal of Developmental Processes, Volume 3: Issue 2, fall 2008

Researchers wanted to see if the widely used Child-Centered Spaces in IDP camps provided effective support for children affected by conflict.

Two sample groups of displaced Ugandan children between the ages of 3-6 years living in two different IDP camps were formed. One group came from a camp with a CCS while the other group (the comparison) did not have any sort of activities or space designated for children. Using verbal interviews with the CCS staff and the other camp's caregivers as well as a questionnaire to obtain quantitative data, researchers compared the overall psycho-social wellbeing (safety, positive social interactions, ability to learn life skills) of the CCS kids with those who lacked the resource.

Impacts:

- 95.4% of CCS children played with other children while 80.5% did so in the other camp.
- 78.2% of CCS kids had a good appetite while 58.5 in the other did.
- 89.2% of CCS children shared with others while 61.9% did so in the other camp.

Overall, the CCS programme helps improve a child's psycho-social wellbeing in post-conflict settings.

The researchers recommend that it is not enough to set up CCSs. It is important to establish holistic multi-level systems of child protection.

5. Teacher sensitisation and training programmes

⁵ This is a second evaluation of the CCF intervention in Afghanistan but focuses on the impact of the intervention on the children rather than programme outputs.

Addressing Afghan Children's Psychosocial Needs in the Classroom: A case study of a training for trainers

Patricia Omidian and Nina Papadopoulos. IRC, January 2003

http://www.healingclassrooms.com/downloads/Addressing_Afg_Childrens_Psychosocial_Needs.pdf

The purpose of the programme was to train IRC Female Education Programme (FEP) teacher trainers in psycho-social wellness models and to facilitate the development of teacher training materials for IRC refugee teachers. Through the training of teacher trainers it was anticipated that teachers would learn how to provide improved psycho-social support to children in the classroom. The psycho-social programming detailed in this case study brings to light how a global concept like psycho-social wellness can be adapted to meet the special needs of Afghan children, resulting in improved learning for all children in the classroom.

Conclusions:

- Participants felt it was important to do a series of small workshops, rather than one long one. This gave them an opportunity to really learn the material and put it into practice before new information was given.
- It was important to recognise the psychological burden that each of the teacher trainers carried, and to incorporate some self-help materials for them as well as the teachers.
- Participants felt their ability to help their teachers was enhanced and that the activities were immediately applicable to their personal lives and to their work.
- A workshop, led by the FEP trainers, was held for all FEP staff as a way to improve training materials and gain feedback on the psycho-social approach. Response was very positive and all trainers felt the material would help their teachers deal with children who face psycho-social challenges.

An Evaluation Exercise of AVSI's Teacher Training Programme Kitgum and Pader Districts

Elena Locatelli, Berta Figueras Costa, Lucia Castelli, Massimo Zucca, April 2002

<http://www.avsi.org/documenti/EvaluationUg.pdf>

The study aimed to:

- Assess the current state of education provision in the districts of Kitgum and Pader (Northern Uganda) and to understand what teachers and pupils see as their primary educational needs.
- Examine the extent to which AVSI's training programme for primary school teachers (which is part of AVSI's psycho-social intervention in the region) has been effective in promoting better standards of education and of care for vulnerable children.

The main aim of AVSI's teachers' training programme is to help teachers recognise the importance of their relationship with students which is much more than the academic aspect. Teachers are there to impart knowledge but also to listen and understand the children and to help them grow into mature, happy and responsible adults.

The researchers randomly selected 40 schools within Kitgum and Pader districts. For half of them, two teachers had attended AVSI's training programme within the last few years, whereas no teachers had been trained by AVSI for the remaining half of the schools. Students and teachers in the selected schools were asked to fill in a questionnaire looking into various aspects of their experiences with the educational system, as well as into their perception of existing teacher-pupil relationships.

Results include: Schools suffer from severe lacks in material, structural and human resources. This makes it harder for teachers to cater for children's psycho-social needs. Despite this, teachers demonstrate a strong awareness of children's psycho-social needs and sometimes (especially in the case of teachers who have attended AVSI's training programme) prioritise these over and above material needs. Teachers who have attended AVSI's programme, although more conscious of the difficulties inherent in trying to provide adequate psychological care for their pupils, feel better equipped to do so. AVSI's training programme for primary school teachers has been successful in enhancing the development of positive teacher-student relationships, and thus in improving student's satisfaction with their education.

Case Study: Civic and Psychosocial Teacher Training Occupied Palestinian Territories⁶

Elana Romahi, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies

http://www.ineesite.org/uploads/documents/store/Civic_and_Psychosocial_Teacher_Training_Teacher_Creativity_Center.doc

The purpose of the project was to enhance the capacity of teachers to deal with children suffering trauma, reduce the negative impact of trauma on students - during and after the crisis - and to reinforce civic education concepts. A Training of Trainers/cluster approach was used to provide training in counselling, crisis and civic education across 16 educational districts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, enhancing the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of teachers.

Teachers demonstrated enhanced capacity to deal with children suffering trauma and to reinforce civic education concepts. Focus group discussions and questionnaires documented an increase in teachers' use of a range of non-violent approaches to resolving conflict, following training. Enhancement of teachers' attitudes and knowledge in terms of conflict resolution, civic education and basic counselling concepts was demonstrated; 70 supervisors developed the capacity to provide TOT (training of trainers) on civic education, counselling and crisis, and 435 teams subsequently developed the capacity to train in these areas. Trainees consistently outperformed the control group in terms of knowledge and attitudes related to counselling, civic education and conflict resolution. As a result of this project, civic education became a top priority for the Ministry of Education.

Teacher Development and Student Well-being: IRC's Healing Classrooms Initiative

Winthrop, R. & Kirk, J. *Forced Migration Review* 22. Jan 2005

<http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR22/FMR2209.pdf>

The Healing Classrooms Initiative identifies and supports the emotional and social lives of teachers as a first step towards improving their abilities to provide psycho-social support to their students. The programme aims to improve teacher development for student wellbeing through research into teachers' and students' experiences in school and their perceptions and beliefs about teaching and learning in selected pilot countries (in this report Ethiopia and Afghanistan).

Most teachers did not consider themselves to be 'real teachers' decreasing their confidence in their abilities as a professional, as well as their effectiveness as healing agents for children. The evaluation further emphasised the need for improved support for teachers' professional development during emergency, chronic crisis and early reconstruction contexts as teachers can have a significant impact on their students' wellbeing.

Emphasising the psycho-social needs of children through a stand-alone 'psycho-social' session/module (for teachers) may not be an effective approach. There is also the risk of over-emphasising the subject, leading some teachers to believe that the training enables them to solve children's problems, which it was never designed to do. A better approach would seem to be to integrate the psycho-social concepts, without naming them as such, into pedagogy, lesson planning and classroom management training.

Also in Promoting Quality Education in Refugee Contexts: Supporting Teacher Development in northern Ethiopia

Jackie Kirk and Rebecca Winthrop International Rescue Committee

International Review of Education, Special Issue on Quality Education in Africa: Challenges & Prospects. Co-editors: M. Ndoye, M. Dembélé & J. Oviawe, 2007

http://www.healingclassrooms.com/downloads/Promoting_Quality_Education_%20Refugee_Contexts.pdf

Psychosocial Training Programme for Education Professionals in the North Caucasus: Final Evaluation Report

Matthias Themel. CARE, December 2001

<http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/erd-3268-full.pdf>

⁶ No information is given about the evaluation and no date given for the intervention or study.

This report describes the final evaluation of the Psycho-social Training Programme implemented by CARE with funding from UNHCR and UNICEF between February 1, 2001 and December 31, 2001. The qualitative approach chosen comprised interviews with various users of the project (teachers, health professionals, children, parents), stakeholders, project management and project team, analysis of existing project progress reports and monitoring files, as well as a wrap-up workshop with representatives of organisations working in the psycho-social sector in Ingushetia and Chechnya.

The aim of the programme was to improve the psycho-social wellbeing/condition of children and families (IDP and residential) in Chechnya and Ingushetia through strengthening the capacity of the targeted Ingush and Chechen education and health facilities to provide a healing and supportive environment to children and families affected by war.

Results in the education sector:

- Teachers apply appropriate teaching methods and are sensitised regarding children's needs. Teachers are able to help children in adverse family or social circumstances. Teachers are able to protect themselves from burn-out and occupational stress.
- Sufficient and culturally appropriate training, information and reference material is available to schools and health facilities.
- Project partners are able to replicate training seminars for education professionals.

Participants in the training were education and health professionals, i.e. teachers, school administrators. Final beneficiaries of the programme were children and families of the region.

The training provided by the programme changed the participants' behaviour and attitude towards school children who show signs of stress and emotional suffering due to their experiences of conflict. The participants felt better able to advise and guide children, parents and patients regarding their difficulties. An atmosphere of increased support could therefore be created in most of the institutions which sent more than one professional to the training. The transfer of training contents to non-participating education professionals could not be sufficiently supported by the programme.

The following two evaluations focus on teacher training to run courses for students and the impact of the courses on students:

Psychosocial Intervention for War-Affected Children in Sierra Leone

Gupta, L., Zimmer, C., *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, pg. 192, 212–216, 2008

The Rapid-Ed intervention programme combining basic education and recreational activities with trauma healing activities, aimed to alleviate traumatic stress symptoms that were interfering with learning, in war-affected children in Sierra Leone. Before administering the Trauma Healing Module, the camp teachers participated in a 6 hour training session on basic child development, current traumatic stress theory, loss and grief reactions, and how to implement the structured trauma healing and recreation activities.

Researchers conducted a survey of displaced children before and after an intervention programme. A randomly selected sample of 315 children aged 8-18 years who were displaced by the war were given a psycho-social assessment interview before and after the non-formal Rapid-Ed programme.

Results:

- 95% of the group reported heightened irritability, hypervigilance, sleep deprivation, and difficulty concentrating in school.
- 4-6 weeks after the group had participated in the Rapid-Ed intervention 73.4% felt better and 22.3% felt much better after sharing their bad memories. 43% of the group stated that they felt relief while participating in the activities.
- 95% said their concentration in school had improved as well.

Combining basic education with trauma healing activities (verbal or visual sharing of memories in particular) in post-conflict settings can have a positive effect on children's psycho-social wellbeing. Alleviating stress and post-conflict behaviours allows children to participate in school settings more fully

and therefore make academic and social progress. Researchers need to conduct confirmatory studies using a control group.

Providing psychosocial support to special needs children: A Case of Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Zimbabwe

Chitiyo, M., Changara, D, Chitiyo, G., *International Journal of Educational Development*, 2008, Volume 28, Page 384–392.

Children who have lost parents to HIV/AIDS have to face innumerable challenges including stigma, grief, fear for death, emotional and behavioural disorder. This study sought to ascertain the effectiveness of implementing psycho-social support (PSS) among children who are orphaned by AIDS in improving their school outcomes.

A total of 20 children aged 10-14 in Mberengwa district of Zimbabwe were involved in the research, and their class teachers, receiving 7 days training on how to provide PSS to the children, provided psycho-social support to the children for eight months. The assessment was done in the form of pre- and post-test interviews for both teachers and children.

The children's previous behaviours included showing signs of withdrawal, short temper, crying and bullying and they lagged behind at school. After the intervention the children showed steady progress on monthly tests as well as improvement in group work. Class attendance of the children and trust from peers were increased, and children said they felt more motivated and encouraged after the group activity.

6. Peer support

Adolescent programming in conflict and post-conflict situation: Case Studies

UNICEF, 2003

<http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Portals/1/cluster%20approach%20page/clusters%20pages/Protection/Adolescent%20programming%20conflict-unicef.pdf>

Following intensified violence in the Gaza region, UNICEF implemented the 'We Care' peer counselling programme in 2003. Partnering with the Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation, the programme aimed to support university students to provide psycho-social counselling to adolescents in severely affected communities in Gaza. Group discussions focused on family relationships, romance, school difficulties, peer pressure, examinations, and other aspects of their day-to-day concerns. Because schools were overburdened with other concerns, this peer-to-peer approach was one of the few ways psycho-social support could be organised in Gaza.

A UNICEF evaluation found that adolescent participants developed stronger feels of trust, mutual respect and group affinity. They also reported reductions in fear and anxiety. In addition, university students benefited as the programme allowed them to contribute to their community at a time of collective need. In the process, the university students reported that they not only experienced personal satisfaction, but that they were also able to practice important skills, such as active listening, empathetic understanding, and group facilitation.

7. Structured psycho-social activities for students

The impact of structured activities among Palestinian children in a time of conflict

Maryanne Loughry, Alastair Ager, Eirini Flouri, Vivian Khamis, Abdel Hamid Afana, and Samir Qouta *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 47:12 (2006), pp 1211–1218

http://www.cpcnetwork.org/admin/includes/doc_view.php?ID=451

This study examined the impact of child-focused interventions involving structured activities, supported by provision of equipment and training of facilitators. The focus of interventions was participation in recreational, cultural and other non-formal activities supporting the development of resilience.

Two hundred and fifty children from the West Bank and 150 children from Gaza took part in the study. Of these 400 children, 300 comprised the intervention group. Fifty children from Gaza and 50 children from the West Bank comprised the comparison group. Measures used were the Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL), the Parental Support Scale and the Hopefulness Scale: Youth Version. Assessment was made as children enrolled in the structured activity programmes and again twelve months later. The intervention appeared successful in improving children's emotional and behavioural wellbeing but not hopefulness. It was also linked with increased parental support in some areas (those located in the West Bank).

The impact of the school-based Psychosocial Structured Activities (PSSA) program on conflict-affected children in northern Uganda

Alastair Ager, Bree Akesson, Lindsay Stark, Eirini Flouri, Braxton Okot, Faith McCollister, and Neil Boothby⁷, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 2011

Children in northern Uganda have undergone significant psycho-social stress during the region's lengthy conflict. A Psycho-social Structured Activities (PSSA) programme was implemented in 21 schools identified as most severely affected by conflict-induced displacement. The PSSA intervention comprised a series of 15 class sessions designed to increase children's resilience through structured activities involving drama, movement, music and art (with components addressing parental support and community involvement).

Eight schools were selected by random quota sampling from those schools receiving the PSSA intervention. Two hundred and three children were identified in these schools to receive the intervention, and were followed up 12 months later following engagement with PSSA activities. A comparison group comprised 200 children selected from schools that had met inclusion criteria for receipt of intervention, but were not scheduled for intervention coverage until later. Preliminary research used participatory focus group methodology to determine local indicators of child wellbeing as viewed by parents, teachers, and children respectively. Pre- and post- assessments focused on ratings for each child – by parents, teachers and children – with respect to these indicators.

Significant increases in ratings of child wellbeing were observed in both intervention and comparison groups over a 12-month period. However, the wellbeing of children who had received the PSSA intervention increased significantly more than for children in the comparison group, as judged by child and parent (but not teacher) report.

Preliminary Analysis of the Psychosocial Structured Activity Program Impact⁸

Melvin, C., Aceh, Indonesia: Save the Children, 2005

In tsunami-affected Aceh (Indonesia), Save the Children staff held focus groups discussions with more than 1,200 parents whose children were in the programme and some 400 parents whose children were waiting to be involved. Marked improvements were noted in the PSSA group, including reduction of traumatic stress symptom, improved motivation, concentration and school performance, increased playfulness, and reduced anti-social behaviour. Reduction in post-traumatic stress symptoms was also noted amongst children in the control group; however, virtually no change was reported in terms of motivation, concentration, school performance or pro-social behaviour.

PSSA programmes are also highly dependent on informed and supportive ministry administrators and school headmasters. The quality of the programme is higher when PSSA facilitators are selected according to core competencies rather other institutional-oriented criteria. Moreover, the PSSA is not designed to help children suffering significant psycho-social disorders, including full-blown PTSD.

School-Based Mental Health Intervention for Children Affected by Political Violence in Indonesia: A Cluster Randomized Trial

Tol, A., Komproe, I., Sussanty, D., Jordans, M., Macy, R., De Jong, J.
JAMA, August 13, 2008—Vol 300, No. 6, American Medical Association, 2008

⁷ Article sent by Neil Boothby

⁸ Unable to locate study. It is described in Boothby and Melvin 2007.

<http://www.bostoncf.org/images/School-Based%20Mental%20Health%20Intervention%20for%20Children-1.pdf>

A study to assess the efficiency of a school-based intervention designed for the mental health of children exposed to armed conflict in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia.

A cluster randomised trial of 495 children between the ages of 7-15 attending randomly selected schools in political violence affected communities, and who were screened for PTSD and anxiety, were placed in two groups: (1) provided children with a mental health intervention, and (2) had children waiting to enter the programme. The programme consisted of 15 sessions, over 5 weeks, of a school-based group intervention, including trauma-processing activities, cooperative play, and creative expressive elements, implemented by locally trained paraprofessionals. Psychiatric symptoms were assessed and compared between the two groups using the Child Post-traumatic Stress Scale.

Researchers found that children participating in the intervention treatment had significantly improved levels of PTSD compared to children not in treatment and an improvement of maintained hope. Boys tended to have increased hope compared to the girls. School-based psycho-social interventions are able to moderately reduce symptoms of PTSD, retain hope and improve social skills. Further research to address the entire range of post-traumatic outcomes is necessary in order to fully prove the effectiveness of school-based interventions.

8. Focused psycho-social activities⁹

Children of the forgotten war: A comparison of two intervention programmes for the promotion of well-being of Sudanese refugee children¹⁰

Paardekooper, B., Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, Academic Proefschrift., 2002

<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=734&language=fr-FR>

This study was of two different psycho-social interventions with child refugees from Southern Sudan, aged 5 to 16 years, who were living in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The interventions aimed to promote the psycho-social wellbeing of the children, as well as to evaluate a low-cost, short-term group programme that can be implemented easily for refugee children in a developing country.

After baseline assessment, 207 children were randomly assigned to a control group or to two different programmes of seven weekly creative activity sessions for groups of 15 children, in the context of a community mental health programme. The control group consisted of children who took place in the pre- and post-test assessment, but did not attend any programme.

The two programmes differed from each other only in terms of the middle four sessions. In the 'psychodynamic' programme, they focused on promoting emotion-focused coping strategies in the children by means of discussions and drawing on the subject of traumatic war and living experiences, memories, loss and mourning. In the 'contextual' programme, they focused on encouraging the children to plan their own possible solutions to problems/stressors they were experiencing in their daily lives as refugees. Participants in both programmes were offered material and emotional support and guidance, and opportunities for socialising with peers.

Compared with children in the control group, children from the contextual programme show significantly better effects on:

- obsessive-compulsiveness and somatisation
- behavioural problems related to fear and concentration problems

⁹ These programmes can be similar to PSSA programmes but tend to be more focused on psychology components than recreational and creative activities. Some of the studies specifically focus on more traumatised youth rather than whole classes.

¹⁰ This intervention was not based in an educational facility but is included because it is similar to programmes introduced in schools.

- post-traumatic memories and post-traumatic depression
- coping, social support network, daily stressors.

Compared with children in the control group, children from the psychodynamic programme showed no significant effects except on:

- social support network
- daily stressors.

Steps to recovery: art therapy and self-help with war traumatized children: 1991–95 Croatian experience

Barath A, *International Journal of Self Help and Self Care* 1: 5–12, 1999

An overview results of a self-help mutual aid programme in helping traumatised children, families, and communities of war-affected areas of former Yugoslavia via art therapies as one of basic means for personal reconciliation, group solidarity, and effective coping. Virtually all participants benefited from the programme in terms of improving their negative self-concept, trust in others, anxiety guilt, hopelessness and hate. Creative art is a highly effective tool for healing and recovery from traumatic life events, including war. However, art therapy in the treatment of war trauma requires a high quality of professional and experiential knowledge.

School-Based Intervention for Prevention and Treatment of Elementary-Students' Terror-Related Distress in Israel: A Quasi-Randomized Control Trial

Berger, R., Pat-Horenczyk, R., Gelkopf, M., *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, Vol. 20, No. 4, August 2007, pp. 541–551

http://www.natal.org.il/english/Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/Hadera_final_published_JTS.pdf

Concerned about the effects of post-traumatic stress in young children exposed to terrorism, a group of researchers implemented a curriculum-based intervention programme focused on reducing post-traumatic symptoms in children grades 2-6. Authors used a quasi-randomised control trial on two groups of elementary school students to determine whether or not a school-based intervention could reduce post-traumatic symptoms in children.

A school-based intervention, Overshadowing the Threat of Terrorism (OTT) was the approach implemented to deal with the threat of ongoing terrorism. In addition to borrowing several of the cognitive-behavioural components used in some targeted programmes, this intervention also incorporated techniques from art therapy, body-oriented strategies, and narrative approaches. The participation of the students' parents and families was elicited by designing homework assignments that required their cooperation.

Students who received the trial intervention reported significant reductions on all measures of PTSD compared to the control group. Authors conclude that a school-based programme implemented in the curriculum and with trained homeroom teachers can be effective in reducing PTSD symptoms in young children exposed to terrorism.

Future research should focus on the long-term effects of this programme on the children's ability to cope with stressful situations and whether it helps improve their future academic performance.

Evaluation of the UNICEF School-Based Psychosocial Program for War-Exposed Adolescents as Implemented During the 2000-2001 School Year. Technical Report.

Layne, C., Davies, R., Burlingame G., Saltzman W., Thomas N., Pynoos R., 2001

http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/BHG_2000_009.pdf

In Bosnia, UNICEF supported the training of school counsellors to implement a school-based treatment programme for at-risk adolescents who had been exposed to significant levels of violence. These school-based counsellors, supervised by outside mental health professionals, were supported to engage with war-affected youth in supportive group therapy. The programme involved about 20 sessions of group

work which aimed to address grief and trauma, and promote resilience and active coping. An evaluation reported the following benefits:

- Human capacity to address war-related trauma was expanded as through the development of a network of school counsellors and mental health professionals.
- Students reported high levels of satisfaction with the programme, and strongly endorsed questions about whether the programme belonged at their schools and whether they would encourage other distressed students to attend it.
- Students' distress scores decreased significantly between pre- and post-treatment.
- Decreases in distress scores were significantly associated with increases in measures of positive psycho-social adjustment, as measured by students' reports of their classroom rule compliance, social withdrawal, peer relationships, and school interest.
- Students' reports of group processes (including catharsis, cohesion, and insight) were positively associated with measures of positive psycho-social adjustment, as measured by students' reports of their classroom rule compliance and school interest.
- The programme was eventually integrated into their overall work plan at the school, thereby increasing opportunities to reach additional students.

Effectiveness of a School-Based Group Psychotherapy Program for War-Exposed Adolescents: A Randomized Controlled Trial¹¹

Layne, C., Saltzman, W., Poppleton, L., Burligame, G., Pasalic, A., Durakovic, E., Music, M., Campara, N., Dapo, N., Arslanagic, B., Steinberg, A., Pynoos, R.

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. 47:9, September 2008

In a randomised control trial, 127 war exposed and predominantly Muslim secondary school students attending 10 school in central Bosnia who were reported as suffering severe symptoms of PTSD, depression/ maladaptive grief and significant impairment in school or relationships, were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions. One group received a classroom-based psycho-education and skills intervention alone and another that consisted of the classroom-based intervention as well as a 17 session manual-based group therapy intervention.

Reduction in symptoms of PTSD and depression were measured at pre-treatment, post-treatment, and in a 4-month follow-up.

- 58% of adolescents in the double treatment intervention reported significant reductions at post-treatment and 81% reported reduction at 4-month check up.
- In comparison, 33% of the adolescents in the single treatment group reported a reduction at post-treatment and 48% at the 4-month check up.

Multi-tiered mental health intervention that includes psycho-educational and skills based components, and specialised mental health will be more effective in reducing PTSD, depression, and social impairment in adolescents.

Psychosocial Intervention for Postdisaster Trauma Symptoms in Elementary School Children; A Controlled Community Field Study

Claude M. Chemtob; Joanne P. Nakashima; Roger S. Hamada, 2002

<http://www.crid.or.cr/digitalizacion/pdf/eng/doc17382/doc17382-contenido.pdf>

Evaluation of a public health-inspired intervention combining school-based screening and psycho-social treatment to identify and treat children with persistent disaster-related trauma symptoms. All 4,258 children in second through sixth grade were screened. The 248 children with the highest levels of psychological trauma symptoms were selected for treatment. Children were randomly assigned to either

11 Summary adapted from summary by Brooke Blanchard and Fumi Kitagawa.

individual or group treatment provided by specially trained school-based counsellors. Treatment comprised 4 sessions.

After treatment, children reported significant reductions in self-reported trauma-related symptoms. This symptom reduction was maintained at the 1-year follow-up. Clinical interviews also indicated that treated children had fewer trauma symptoms compared with untreated children. School-based community-wide screening followed by psycho-social intervention seems to effectively reduce children's disaster-related trauma symptoms and may facilitate psychological recovery. While group and individual treatments did not differ in efficacy, fewer children dropped out of the group treatment.

9. Other useful resources

Useful publications:

Children In Crisis: Good Practices In Evaluating Psychosocial Programming

Joan Duncan and Laura Arntson,

The International Psychosocial Evaluation Committee and Save the Children Federation, Inc., 2004

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMH/Resources/Evaluating_Psychosocial_Programming.pdf

Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care

UNHCR, 1994

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b3470.html>

Includes a section on psycho-social wellbeing

Guidebook to planning education in emergencies and reconstruction Education for all in emergency situations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2006

<http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/focus/emergency/guidebook.htm>

Includes a section on psycho-social interventions

Youth and Conflict: A Brief Review of Available Literature

Marc Sommers, USAID and EQUIP3 / Youth Trust, 2006

http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT380.pdf

Includes a section on psycho-social programming

Useful websites:

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/background-papers/2011/>

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)

<http://www.ineesite.org>

International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

<http://www.iiep.unesco.org/information-services/publications/search-iiep-publications/education-in-emergencies.html>

Forced Migration Review

<http://www.fmreview.org/>

10. Additional information

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