

Experience and Innovation



Pakistan/ IRC

HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT

To learn more about IRC's programs and support our efforts to meet the needs of young people affected by war, please contact us:

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IRC Responds
IRC responds by protecting young people and meeting their developmental needs during wartime and through post-conflict reconstruction. IRC:

- Strengthens children, youth and communities' resilience so that they are better able to recover and rebuild their lives.
- Secures emergency care for separated children and reunites families.

- Provides formal and non-formal education from the earliest possible phase of a crisis.
- Helps former child soldiers recover and reintegrate into their communities.
- Ensures active participation and leadership of young people in rebuilding their communities.

Building on over 70 years of experience, IRC's programs help protect and nurture 350,000 young people in over 20 countries worldwide.

Founded in 1933, the International Rescue Committee is a world leader in relief, rehabilitation, protection, post-conflict development, resettlement services and advocacy for those uprooted or affected by violent conflict and oppression. The IRC delivers lifesaving aid in emergencies, rebuilds shattered communities, cares for war-traumatized children, rehabilitates health care, water and sanitation systems, reunites separated families, restores lost livelihoods, establishes schools, trains teachers, strengthens the capacity of local organizations and supports civil society and good-governance initiatives. Committed to restoring dignity and self-reliance, the IRC is a global symbol of hope and renewal for those who have taken flight in search of freedom.



The International Rescue Committee



Sudan/ Gerry Martone

CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Protecting and nurturing young people in armed conflict and through recovery

Setting Higher Standards Through Experience and Innovation



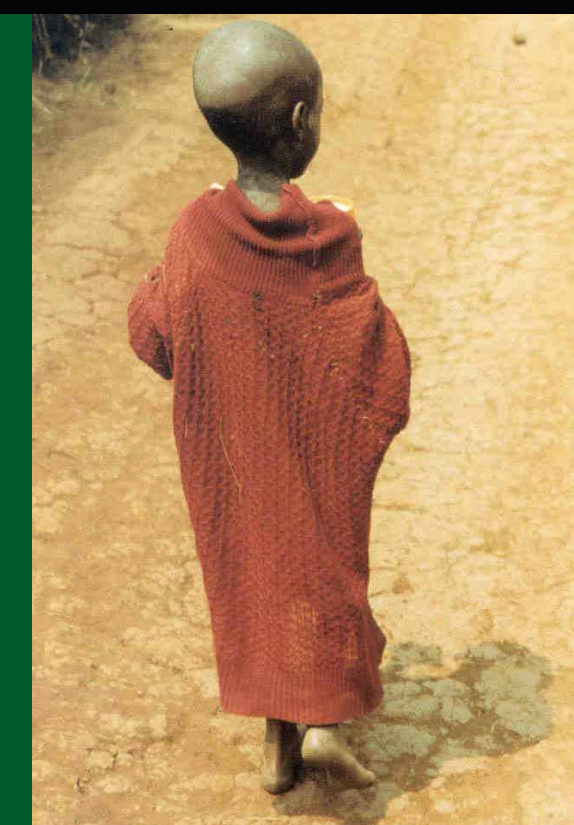
Setting Higher Standards Through

War exacts an unacceptable toll on young people

Today, some 30 armed conflicts rage around the world, and children and youth continue to suffer disproportionately, enduring multiple traumas and losses.

Children are murdered and wounded, abducted, used as soldiers and sexually abused. They lose parents, friends and communities, structure and stability, opportunities to learn, and, ultimately, a sense of trust and hope. They are compelled to take on adult roles, having to protect and nurture their younger siblings.

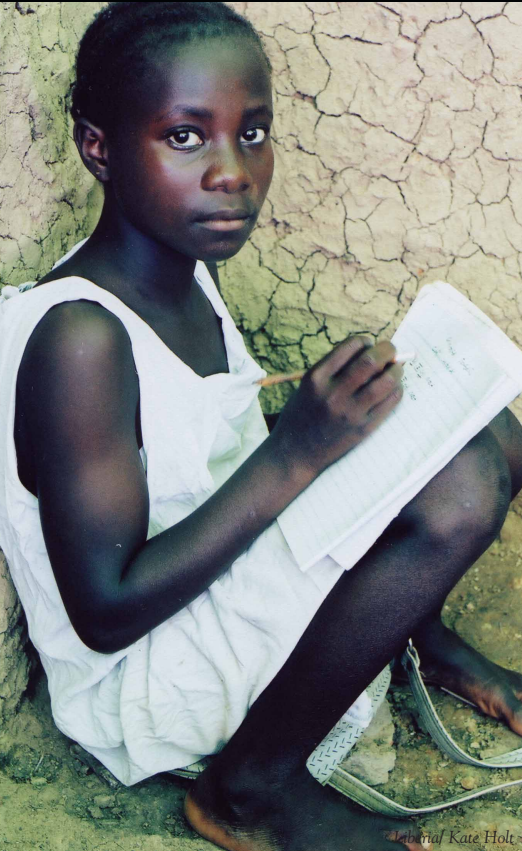
War violates the basic human rights of young people and undermines their development, carrying grave implications for their well-being, and that of their families, communities and countries.



Rwanda/ IRC

Protecting and nurturing young people in armed conflict and through recovery

Protecting and Nurturing Young People in Armed Conflict and Through Recovery

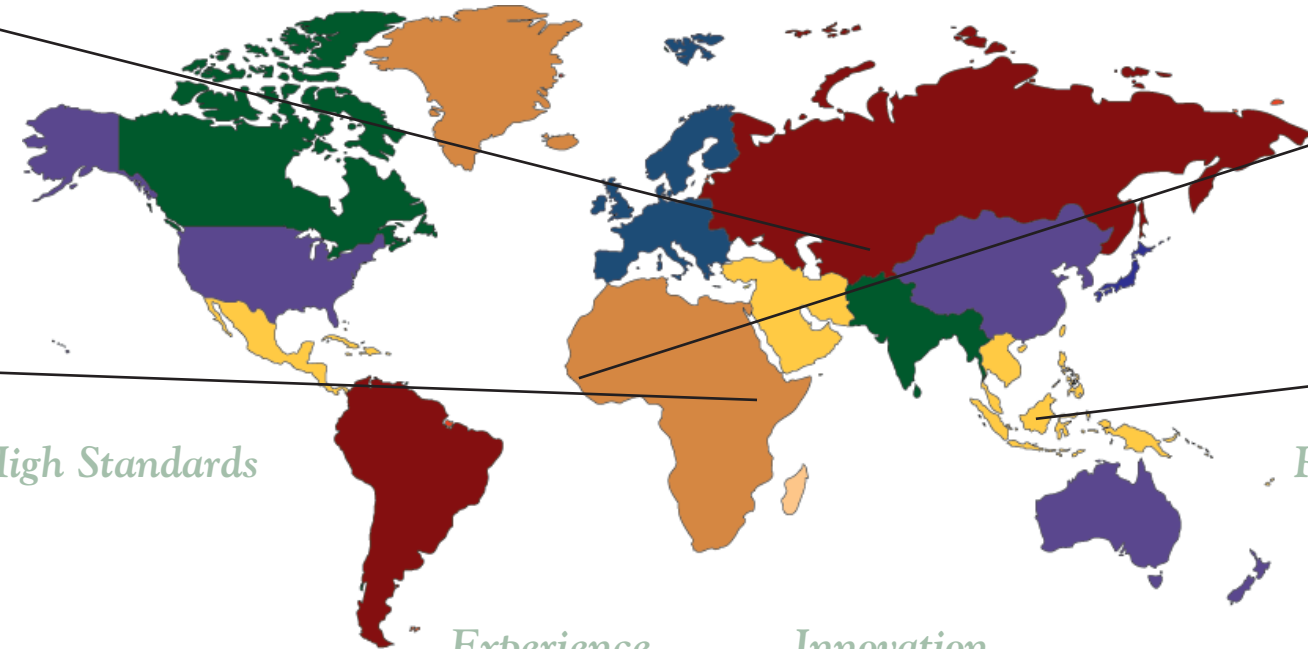


In northern **Uganda**, at least 20,000 children have been abducted by the rebel group the LRA during a ruthless 18 year civil war. Thousands have managed to escape. When found, the children are usually in a state of shock and in need of immediate medical and psychological attention. They also need to find and rejoin their families and begin the slow process of healing, recovery and community reintegration.

IRC began assisting formerly abducted children in Kitgum District in 1998 and has received and helped reintegrate over 2,000 children.



First established in the 1980s, IRC's education programs in **Afghanistan** today serve over 14,000 students in community-based schools in 150 villages with a strong focus on girls. IRC also works with the Ministry of Education to train teachers and school administrators and assists with long-term planning, curriculum development, and strengthening teacher-training institutes.



IRC has successfully reunited with their parents or other family members 4,500 separated **Sierra Leonean and Liberian** children. Over a period of 12 years of civil wars in their countries, the children had crossed the border to the relative safety of Guinea where IRC identified and registered them.

In **Indonesia**, IRC has worked with youth for over five years in conflict-affected areas. A Youth Civic Participation program in post-conflict North Maluku provides thousands of under- and unemployed young people with education, sports and recreation activities promoting positive social interaction and reconciliation and enhancing employment prospects. Trained youth oversee youth center programs.



High Standards

Experience

Innovation

Results



Community reintegration of former child soldiers promotes psychosocial healing

Widespread use of children in armed conflicts is one of the most atrocious trends in wars today. An estimated 300,000 boys and girls are currently trained for combat or used as porters, spies or sex slaves around the world. They are compelled to become instruments of war, to kill or be killed, with devastating effects on their physical, emotional and social development.

IRC provides immediate protection, health care and critical emotional support to children who have been demobilized or have escaped from armed forces. Our extensive experience in working with former child soldiers has taught us that they will

recover when communities fully accept the child back, and help him or her assume a positive role and identity. IRC supports cultural approaches that promote healing and reconciliation; strengthens local schools to enable them to offer a place for the returned child and other out-of-school children; helps secure vocational training opportunities, and promotes community child protection committees that will provide support to vulnerable children over time.

All children have a right to education — education builds essential skills and fosters peace

Formal and non-formal education play a fundamental role in mitigating the effects of war-related trauma, providing structure and stability, and enabling young people to regain hope and dignity. Education both provides an opportunity for young people's personal development and prepares them for constructive adulthood and active participation in the rebuilding of their countries.

IRC education programs ranging from school reconstruction to teacher training, material distribution, and a focus on girls' and community participation, reach over 230,000 children and youth in 20 countries worldwide. IRC is a leader in the development of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergency's Minimum Standards and serves on the Steering Group of this inter-agency network.

Ensuring care for separated children and reuniting them with their families

In the chaos of war, mass population movements and other crises, many children become separated from their families. These children have lost the care and protection of their parents when they most need it, they face abuse and exploitation and their very survival is threatened.

As soon as access to an area is secured, IRC identifies and registers separated children to protect them from further threats and abuse and immediately starts the complex process of tracing their families. IRC's long experience with family tracing has shown that most, if not all, separated chil-

dren have family members willing and able to care for them if they can be found.

While working to reunite families, we ensure that the children are well cared for within a family context, usually by a family from their own communities. We regularly monitor the care, and ensure that the children have access to activities which help strengthen their resilience so that they may better cope with family separation and the difficult environment.

IRC first started tracing and family reunification of separated children in 1980 during the Cambodian refugee crisis in Thailand.

Engaging and developing the vitality and capacity of youth is critical to rebuilding communities

Modern-day conflicts are devastating for boy and girl adolescents and youth who face distinct risks in armed conflict. Youth are especially vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation and recruitment into fighting forces, and face serious reproductive health risks, including contracting HIV/AIDS. Despite these extreme risks, their unique needs, roles and capacities are often ignored in humanitarian responses.

Recognizing the tremendous untapped potential of youth and the fact that their participation and leadership are essential to both their own well-being and that of their war-affected communities, IRC

implements a range of protection and development initiatives, many of them led by youth themselves.

IRC youth-focused programs include peer counseling on critical issues, such as HIV/AIDS prevention and conflict resolution; youth-led sports and recreational activities for youth and younger children; youth organizing and participation in community affairs; literacy and accelerated learning programs to make up for lost education; and support for youth livelihood through vocational training, entrepreneurship and economic development programs.