

EXPERIENCE AND INNOVATION

IRC RESPONDS



Indonesia / IRC

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.
- Partners with local populations, and builds the capacity of local organisations, to create and support sustainable child protection systems.

- 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.
- Combats the worst forms of child labor through improved access to education.

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

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:

www.theirc.org/children

children@theirc.org

International Rescue Committee

122 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10168-1286, USA

International Rescue Committee Belgium

10 Square Ambiorix, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

International Rescue Committee UK

11 Glower Street, London WC1E6HB, UK

International Rescue Committee Switzerland

Rue Gautier, 7 CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland

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-affected 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.

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CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT



Sudan / Gerry Martone

PROTECTING AND NURTURING YOUNG PEOPLE IN ARMED CONFLICT AND THROUGH RECOVERY

Setting Higher Standards Through Experience and Innovation



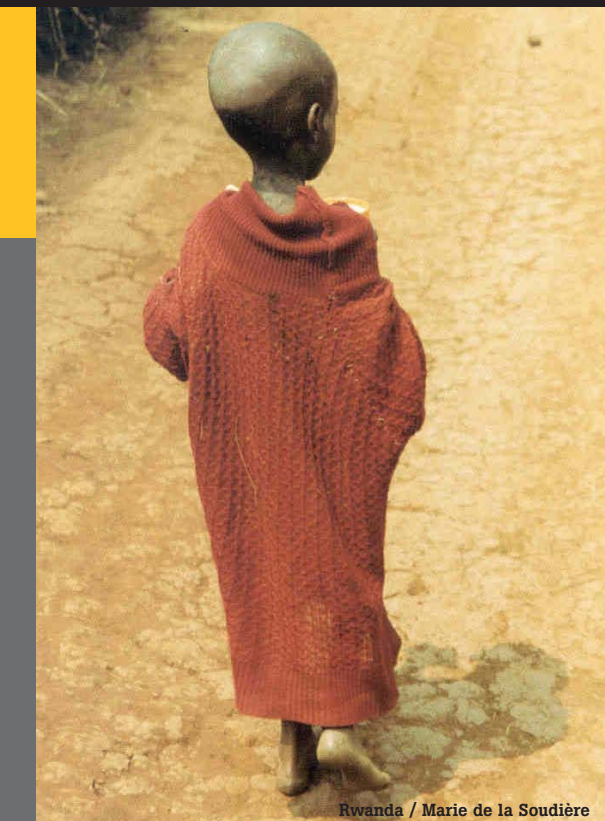
SETTING HIGHER STANDARDS THROUGH

War exacts an intolerable toll on young people

Today, some 30 armed conflicts rage around the world, with children and youth suffering disproportionately. More than 30 million people are displaced because of war, 50% of whom are children.

In the violence of war, children are murdered, and wounded. They are abducted, used as soldiers, suffer sexual abuse and risk life-threatening illness.

They lose parents, friends and communities in conflict and during mass flight. Young people are compelled to take on adult roles, protecting and providing for younger children. Children lose opportunities to learn, and are denied the structure, stability and predictability they need to develop their potential. They ultimately lose their sense of trust and hope for the future.



Rwanda / Marie de la Soudière

PROTECTING AND NURTURING YOUNG PEOPLE IN ARMED CONFLICT AND THROUGH RECOVERY

PROTECTING AND NURTURING YOUNG PEOPLE IN ARMED CONFLICT AND THROUGH RECOVERY

1 IRC has successfully reunited 4,500 separated **Sierra Leonean** and **Liberian** children with their parents or other family members. 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, registered and supported them in foster families while tracing their families.



Liberia / IRC



Sudan / IRC

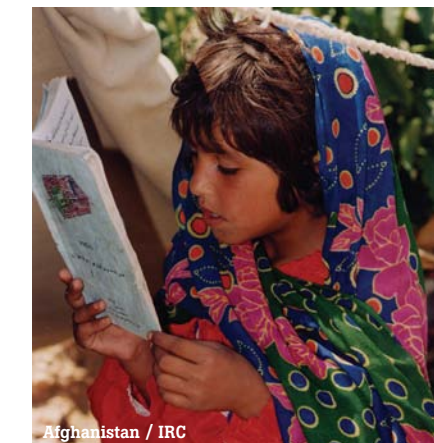
2 After more than 20 years of civil war, **South Sudan** is left with a hugely inadequate workforce. As a result, massive investment in literacy and vocational skills will be required for the successful reintegration and reconstruction of the country. In Juba, South Sudan, the IRC is intervening to address these challenges by supporting formal vocational skills training for vulnerable youth as well as offering literacy and business skills classes in six different IDP camps. Youth that have been selected to participate in a carpentry skills program are hopeful that the training they receive will help them find lucrative work opportunities in the future.



Uganda / IRC

3 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 Programs are particularly focusing on helping the girls who were abducted through access to education and vocational training.



Afghanistan / IRC

4 First established in the 1980, IRC's education programs in **Afghanistan** support over 30,000 children with a strong focus on girls, through the establishment of 200 community-based schools. IRC also works with the Ministry of Education to train teachers and school administrators and assists with long-term planning, curriculum development and teacher development.

Community reintegration of former **child soldiers** promotes psychosocial healing

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

Ensuring care for **separated children** and reuniting them with their families

Engaging and developing the vitality and skills of **youth** is critical to rebuilding communities and sustaining peace

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. We strengthen local schools so that there are places for former child soldiers and other out-of-school children. We help secure vocational training opportunities. IRC promotes community child protection committees and other local partners to provide a sustainable system of support to vulnerable children.

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

300,000 children and youth in 20 countries worldwide.

IRC's Healing Classrooms Initiative is an innovative project that addresses teacher's critical roles in creating supportive and healing learning environments for children. By improving access to education IRC is actively working to reduce the number of children in the worst forms of child labor.

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.

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 are at risk of 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 children 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 community. 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.

Youth in areas of conflict bear not only physical wounds, but also the emotional and mental scars that war leaves in its wake, not the least of which are the loss of educational opportunities and the death of parents. Demonstrating profound resilience, many conflict-affected youth take on the additional burden of becoming the primary breadwinners for themselves and their families. Despite these extreme risks and responsibilities, their unique needs and capacities are often ignored in humanitarian responses. The IRC believes that by providing youth with a marketable and adaptable skill set, the chance to participate in civic and com-

munity affairs, access to life-sustaining services, mentoring and psychosocial support, youth will be better equipped to tackle the challenges that lay ahead, contributing to the betterment of the communities, countries and world in which they live.

The IRC's youth-focused programs include peer counseling on issues such as HIV/AIDS prevention and conflict resolution; youth-led recreational activities; participation in community affairs; literacy and accelerated learning programs; and livelihoods support through vocational training, apprenticeship and entrepreneurial skills development.