

Lesson 1: Because I am a Child

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson examines how war and instability in countries can affect children disproportionately, but especially girls. The lessons are based on Plan International's 2008 report in the series 'State of the World's girls' called 'In the Shadow of War'

LESSON AIMS

- To show how children suffer as innocent victims in zones where there is instability or war
- To show how boys and girls are affected differently
- To show that girls are more vulnerable than boys in war situations

PREPARATION

- Familiarise yourself with the teacher's notes and the student materials. These lessons contain information about issues which may not be suitable for students below Y9. You need to make a judgement about this using your knowledge of the class.
- Copies of the Activity sheets should be available for all students
- Remind students that they can get involved with the '[Books not Bullets](#)' campaign run by Plan UK

Watch Point!

Students in your class who are recent immigrants to Britain may have suffered some of the traumas mentioned in the lesson. You should discuss it with them first – whether they would be willing to provide first hand evidence, remain silent or be absent from the lesson.

STARTER

Begin by asking a few brief questions about conflict and warfare in the British context

1. **When** was the last conflict between armies on the ground in England?

Answer: Over 360 years ago – the Civil War between the king and Parliament.

2. **What** was the last conflict fought on British soil and when did it end?

Answer: The war between the British government and the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Ireland was ruled by Britain for hundreds of years until 1916 when the Irish rebelled. After fierce fighting and over 2000 fatalities, the Republic of Ireland was founded in 1922. Northern Ireland, with inhabitants of English descent stayed under British rule. Many Irish people felt that Northern Ireland should have also been given back to the Republic and continued to fight a terrorist war against the British. A peace agreement was only reached in 1998.

3. **How many** people died in England as a result of the war between the British and the IRA?

a. None b. 125 c. 60

Answer: b, 125. Source: Malcolm Sutton's study of the death toll during the civil unrest between 1969 and 2000.

4. In modern warfare do more **soldiers** or **civilians** get killed and injured? Why have things changed over time in this respect?

Answer: Civilians. Many years ago, wars were fought at close range and villages/towns were looted. However, since the development of modern air warfare, and rocket bombs, many more civilians are killed or injured. E.g. in WWI civilians accounted for 5% of casualties, which rose to 48% in WW2. Today, up to 90 % of casualties are civilians – increasingly women and children.'

Explain that this lesson will look in particular at the ways in which people who are not fighting and may have nothing at all to do with the war are affected by it.

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MAIN ACTIVITY - IN TIMES OF WAR

Give out the ACTIVITY SHEET 1 - CASUALTY!

🕒 Ask the students, working in pairs, to match the statements from the different children with the different bad effects caused by war.

🕒 Ask students to select from the list of disadvantages, two which would be the most difficult to deal with as a child. Talk about why this might be the case. Use the pictures either to illustrate the issues raised by the text or, use them with more visual learners to work directly from the pictures. Points to discuss or write about are located near the illustrations.

🕒 Ask the students, again working in pairs or small groups, to think about the difference between a direct consequence of war and an indirect consequence, which can also be very damaging. Ask them to sort the list into direct and indirect consequences. They can set put their lists in the grid included on Activity sheet 1. Get feedback from the class by comparing lists.

PLENARY

Ask students to think back to the beginning of the lesson when they thought about how little conflict has taken place on British soil over the centuries. Underline the fact that countries which are in conflict find it difficult to become prosperous. Can they give any reasons for this?

Finally ask students to discuss how girls and boys might be affected differently by warfare. Do they think that boys or girls would suffer more and why? Explain that this will be the focus of the next lessons.

UK CURRICULUM LINKS

Curriculum links	
ENGLAND (Citizenship) Key concepts: Justice; human rights and responsibilities; diversity. Key processes: critical thinking and enquiry; advocacy; taking informed and responsible action	WALES (PSE) Active Citizenship Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship
SCOTLAND (Citizenship) Global Citizenship Political Awareness Human Rights Equalities	NORTHERN IRELAND (Citizenship) Local & Global Citizenship Diversity & Inclusion Equality & Social Justice Human Rights and Responsibilities Democracy & Active Participation

When wars break out

Wars are fought for many different reasons. Sometimes there are disagreements over land or resources such as water. Sometimes two peoples or nations have long disagreements which result in fighting. At other times a strong nation invades a weaker nation out of power or greed. This may be against international law but it can still happen.

Often fighting breaks out within a country. For example in Somalia there has been no steady government since 1991. A government was formed with the support of the next door country Ethiopia but another group in Somalia are against this and are protesting through small-scale attacks which happen nearly every day. Wars like this are called civil wars. They are often supported by other countries who want to see one side or the other win.

Children of war

It is thought that about 6,000,000 (six million) children around the world have been killed or wounded in armed conflicts in the last ten years. (According to the United Nations definition, a child is anyone under 18 years of age).

Children in warfare may be affected in a number of ways. Amongst these are:

- Killed or injured
- Injuries to relations or close friends
- Captured or kidnapped
- Having to do the work of parents
- No school or training
- Little food, poor health care.

In the table below, headed Student sheet 2 'Effects of War on Children' there are some examples of these effects taken from different countries around the world. Read each person's story and draw a line linking it to the type of effect it is.

Some of these effects are directly caused by war. Others are more indirect. Divide the effects into direct and indirect causes of war. Put them into two columns like this:

Direct effects of war	Indirect effects of war



Look at the picture of this little girl in Sarajevo. Talk about what you think might be going on here. What clues are in the picture itself?

A sick child in a hospital in war-torn Liberia



This girl lives in Nepal. She is having to care for her little brother



Looking at the pictures, think about how you might see children in this country in situations a little bit similar to these. Then think about the differences between their situation and your own. What evidence of the differences can you see in the pictures?

ACTIVITY SHEET 2 Effects of War on Children

Effects of war with personal stories

Effects of war on children	Personal Stories
Sexual violence	Since my husband died I need to work outside the home and someone should stay at home to take care of the youngest children and I have no one but them. It is sad to see my two girls losing their future like this but it is better than losing their lives. Iraqi mother
Little food, poor health care	My friend, Clare, a Catholic, was going out with someone from the British Army, until he was captured and stripped by the IRA, while Clare was made to watch. They told him that he would regret the day he ever lay a hand on one of 'their' girls. Northern Irish young woman
No school or training	"I was 11 when the rebels attacked our town in Liberia. I got separated from my parents and was captured. I stayed with the rebels for four years. Young woman, Liberia
Taking over the role of parents	At 13, Lucy was made the third wife of a commander. She suffered sexual abuse and was beaten by her older co-wives. She considered suicide. Ugandan girl
Captured or kidnapped	"The occupation by Israeli soldiers affects everything [we have]. We live in poverty – and it directly affects our education." Palestinian girl.
Injuries to relations or close friends	The ten year conflict in Nepal has had bad consequences for the people. One young woman was married at 15 and had had five babies by the age of 20. She says, "I am in pain everywhere from the neck down. I can hardly walk but I have to go to the forest to get wood, tend to the animals and carry manure to the field". This was caused by giving birth too early and too often with too little medical help. A mother in Nepal

DISCUSSION POINT

- Sometimes the indirect consequences of war can be more damaging than the direct consequences. Why do you think this might be so?

Lesson 2: Why do children join up to fight?

This lesson looks at the issue of child soldiers and in particular at the involvement of girls in direct acts of warfare. This material should be carefully read before presenting it to students because of the strong content. If you need more background information from the latest report see chapter 2 pp 57 – 63. The whole report is available at www.becauseiamagirl.org

LESSON AIMS

- To look at some of the reasons why children become soldiers
- To examine reasons and consequences of girls enlisting in the military
- To show how individuals and organisations can help girls who have been soldiers.

PREPARATION

- Copies of the Activity Sheets below should be available for all students
- Remind students about the '[Books not Bullets](#)' campaign run by Plan UK

STARTER

Begin the lesson by asking how many of the class know the age of enlistment in this country (i.e. the United Kingdom). In France it is 17 and it is voluntary. In Germany it is 18 and it is compulsory. In India the minimum age to enlist in the army is 16 but soldiers do not fight in battle zones until they are 18.

Answer:

In the UK it is possible to apply to join the army at 15years 9 months! The age of enlistment in UK is 16 (military service is voluntary but that to be with parental consent. Soldiers are not active in combat zones before age 18.

BRIEF CLASS DISCUSSIONS

Does the class think it right that under 18s fight for their country (before the age of consent to vote)? Why do people sign up to the army? **Possible answers:** to prove you're a man; to see the world; to defend your country; to help keep peace around the world; to have fun; for the discipline; to learn some skills, like engineering; it's a steady job.

Ask the class to think about which of these reasons could be even more important in poor countries. This leads into the main activity.

MAIN ACTIVITY

- Give out **Activity Sheet 1** 'Girls Allowed'. In countries where extreme poverty is endemic and girls are discriminated against, joining the army can achieve for them some level of protection.
- **Activity Sheet 2** - 'Some things never change...or do they?' presents a picture from the Congo of a young woman who volunteered to fight thinking it would mean a better life. Work through the discussion points about how things might be improved for children caught up in conflict.



TEACHERS NOTES Because I am a Girl 2008

PLENARY

Compare and contrast the suggestions coming out of the discussions related to the activity sheets.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Write a poem or a piece of personal reflective writing sparked by images in activity sheets

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Liberia is a country on the west coast of Africa which suffered from over ten years of civil war until 2003. During that war, more than 250,000 civilians died.

Many young people below the age of 18 joined the armies to fight. The boys suffered in many ways but girls also joined – they had to do a variety of jobs. Some girls actually volunteered to become soldiers. They felt that, for the first time, they could be equal.

“In the army we were equal to the men. We were fighting as well. So we proved to the men that we could do it. What men can fight, women can fight, even better!” Girl soldier, Liberia



Picture Girl soldier in Liberia taken the day the fighting stopped in 2003.

This gives one idea as to why some girls actually volunteer to join the army. Nowhere else in their lives can they stand beside boys and do the same job. In Liberia there are not many situations like this. In the army all fighting soldiers have the same access to training and health care. In peace time, boys often come first for these things.

Women peace builders

Women soldiers were sent by the UN from India to Liberia to help keep the peace. Women had a special role to play because there were reports of international male peace-keepers sexually abusing local women.

A United Nations officer said, "It also sends a message ... that women officers can have any position and play any role in a police organisation," Women soldiers can help to change traditional attitudes to gender relations in a country.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/6314263.stm>



But life as a girl soldier is also hard. This is what one girl from Sri Lanka said:

“The training was seven days a week and was strict. If you could not keep up you were given a heavy rifle to hold above your head while performing sitting-to-standing exercises. At the same time you were randomly hit and kicked. These body blows were delivered without mercy.”



Young female fighters in Liberia during the civil war. The girl closest to the camera is wearing her school uniform

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: Write a poem or a piece of personal reflective writing sparked by this image

DISCUSSION POINTS: Some things to talk or write about

- Would you be in favour of banning girl soldiers from every army? Why?
- Why do you think girls might join the army? Are there any good reasons?



ACTIVITY SHEET 2 Some things never change...or do they?

CASE STUDY

Aimerance, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, (an African state where fighting has been very bitter) joined the army willingly. Her father lost his land and the family was left with no money:

“After leaving school I spent my time at home. I was 14. My friend was in a rebel faction (group). She said she was doing well. So that’s why I joined.

But things did not go well for Aimerance:

“In the morning they would take us to guard [military buildings]. We also had to do all the cooking for lots and lots of people who were there. It was a lot of work.

“I felt I had no more energy left within me. I felt so weak and feeble and like I had lost all of my intelligence. Now I feel very bad here [pointing to her lower abdomen]”.

Eventually, Aimerance managed to escape and get back to her family.

DISCUSSION POINTS: Discuss or write about

- What kind of help might Aimerance need when she gets back home?
- Congo is very poor. Who should try to help her and how?
- Read the case study below. How important is the kind of work being done by THINK, in your opinion? What else might be done?

Case study Help for women and girls who fought and suffered

In Liberia, a charity has been set up to help women and girls who were forced to fight during the civil war. The charity is called THINK which stands for “Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness”. THINK runs two homes, which each has rooms for 25 women or girls and their children. Here they are given food, medical help, psychological help and also legal advice. They are helped to take their place back in society, though this can take time.

THINK is given help by other charities including Medicin sans Frontieres (an international medical charity) and UNICEF

ACTIVITY SHEET 2 Some things never change...or do they?



Another Liberian project supported by Plan International aims to improve the education of girls in four areas of the country. Half of the boys in the country can read and write but only a quarter of the girls can.

Special girls' clubs are run in many places to raise the girls' self esteem and help them to be more able to resist unwanted sexual advances. The clubs are run by African women teachers.

One girl said, "Mrs Cole told me to join the girls' club and that this might help me feel better about myself. So I did. I also told my friends to join. Mrs Cole said she would help me try and find a way to stop the abuse and now it has stopped."

DISCUSSION POINTS: Talk or write about

- Are there any similarities you can see between the treatment of women in the UK and in Liberia or Congo? What differences are there?
- The president of Liberia is now a woman. She is the first ever female head of state of an African country. However, men are still very dominant in Liberia. What steps do you think the President might take to bring more equality between the sexes? Here are some ideas:
 - Change the law?
 - Better education?
 - Public awareness campaign?
 - Better advice to women?
 - Raise the standard of living in the country?
- Develop an action plan with some ideas about what you think should be tackled first.
- Write a letter to the President of Liberia, urging her to do something about the status of women in her country. What arguments would you use?

Lesson 3: How do girls suffer in conflict situations?

LESSON OBJECTIVES

This lesson examines how war and instability in countries can particularly affect girls' social situation. If you need more background information from Plan's latest report see chapter 1 pp 26 – 41. The whole report is available at www.becauseiamagirl.org.

LESSON AIMS

- To show the effects of instability and conflict on girls' social situation
- To understand some of the effects of conflict on the provision of social goods
- To examine some work aimed at improving the lot of girls in developing countries

PREPARATION

- Copies of the Activity sheets should be available for all students
- The lesson would be suitable for cross-curricular work, linking with the art department, or for an art-based activity (see below).
- Remind students about the '[Books not Bullets](#)' campaign run by Plan UK

STARTER

Use **Activity Sheet 1** 'Social goods' to begin the lesson by thinking about the basic social goods which everyone needs to make a good start in life, as well as the possible barriers e.g. security of family life, access to health, education and freedom from discrimination. Ask students to draw on their own experience.

MAIN ACTIVITY

Give out **Activity Sheet 2** 'The impacts on social goods' containing examples of barriers which can prevent children, especially girls, from enjoying the basic rights. Ask students working in pairs to read the situations and for each one, identify which of the four social goods they impact on most directly. Students write in the number(s) of the social goods in the boxes below the text. Compare the answers they give to underline the direct and indirect effects of the failure of social infrastructures. Ask students to think about ways in which these situations might be improved via individual, local, national and international agencies.

CLASS DISCUSSION

Activity Sheet 3 'Being a woman isn't a curse' provides information about some positive work to impact young women in Pakistan in terms of health, equality issues and economic security. The questions could support critical discussion of the case study and opportunities for written work.

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Social Goods

What do all children need to be able to grow up healthily? What makes them able to look after themselves and their families later in life?

The answers are not hard to discover. Most children do better if they have had:

- a secure family life
- good health services
- good education
- freedom from discrimination

Many children around the world have little access to these things because their country is poor, or it may be in conflict, when things can quickly break down. The country may be a **fragile state** where the social services and organisation needed to deliver things like health and education are not strong and break down easily in times of stress.

It is often the children who suffer first, and between the boys and the girls, it is often the girls who do worst.

The four social goods we have thought about are listed below. In the right hand column list some of the things (or factors) which might prevent girls from getting access to them.

Social goods	What might stop girls enjoying the benefit of them?
1. Secure family life	
2. Good health services	
3. Good education	
4. Freedom from discrimination	

Impact in Social Goods

Look at the issues below. Which of the four social goods do they each affect? Put the number in the box from the list on Activity Sheet 1. It might be more than one for each issue. Discuss this with a partner when you have made your own choice.

<p>When countries are not very stable because of poverty, conflict or something else, social services can quickly break down</p>	<p>In unstable countries it becomes harder for children to move around because it is dangerous. This is worse for girls than boys, and it can keep them a prisoner of the home, even stopping them going to school.</p>
<p>In countries where war looks likely, the government often chooses to spend its money on the army and weapons instead of schools and hospitals. Teachers and health workers begin to leave their jobs because their salaries stop, or the supplies they need dry up</p>	<p>When services break down, many children do not get registered at birth because there is no one to do it. Officially these children do not exist. In some countries, you need a birth certificate to attend or finish school.</p>
<p>In very poor countries things like sanitation systems can break down and not get repaired. This can include water supplies. Girls and women are more likely to be the ones who have to spend hours fetching the water.</p>	<p>In Haiti in the Caribbean there has been a very long tradition of violence and discrimination against women and girls in society. Rape is common and the children born as a result of rape are treated very badly. There is no social support for these families.</p>

Being a woman isn't a curse

The Girl Child Project in Pakistan is trying to help girls overcome the difficulties they face in the following ways:

- **Workshops** to give training in hygiene and nutrition.
- **Teaching kits** for girls who can already read and write which include a blackboard, chalk and some wall posters. They can take these to their home villages and teach girls who have not been to school. This can help them earn some money as well.
- **First aid training** which helps girls raise the standard of health in their villages. They may also learn other skills to help them make money.

This work can make a huge difference to the way young women feel about themselves. Sumera Zafar says:



Girls in a tent school in Pakistan

“I was extremely shy ... but people trust my judgement now. Girls from all over the neighbourhood come to me with their various problems and ask me to help resolve serious domestic [home] issues. The Girl Child Project really helped girls like me to believe in themselves. It [showed] us that being a woman wasn't a curse or a bad thing. It taught us to love ourselves and to be proud of what we are. Now I actually feel that women are as good as men.”

Things to talk or write about

- Sumera says she now thinks 'being a woman isn't a curse'. Where do you think that belief came from and what effect could it have on someone like Sumera?
- In what ways can these attitudes be broken down? Who should try to change these attitudes?
- If you were able to fund a project either to provide more health care for women or a project to give them greater equality, which would you choose and why?
- What kind of work should be done with men and boys to improve equality between the sexes? Why do you think projects like this are more often offered to women themselves?
- Plan a campaign to raise awareness of the problems girls face in developing countries as the result of war or poverty. Think about what individuals, governments and international organisations like Plan UK might do. See the campaigns section of Plan UK's website for ideas <http://www.plan-uk.org/action/campaigns/>

Lesson 4: How can we promote children’s rights?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson looks at how rights are established and then implemented by international agreements and law. This lesson is more complex in its content than earlier lessons so it could be used as KS3 extension work for more able students, or as a reference section to the first three lessons. If you need more background information from the latest report see chapter 4 pp 112 - 133. The whole report is available online at www.becauseiamagirl.org

LESSON AIMS

- To show how the concept of children’s rights is supported by forms of international law
- To show how the international community is working to promote and defend children’s rights
- To show how international NGOs work to lobby governments, international bodies and develop work at the grass roots

PREPARATION

- Copies of the Activity Sheets
- Access to the internet to carry out the research tasks.
- Remind students about the ‘[Books not Bullets](#)’ campaign run by Plan UK

STARTER

Begin the lesson by asking students what they know about the enforcement of laws. They should have a basic idea that laws are enforced by police and the courts system. Then ask them what would happen if the laws could not be enforced. Ask students if there could be a law which was not enforceable by a court. They may think that a law without enforcement is pointless. Point out that much international law is still without a World Court to enforce it but that increasingly ways are found to enforce elements of international law, such as War Crimes.

MAIN ACTIVITY

Give out the 3 Activity Sheets and make sure students understand the text. The example used is article 7, the right to a legally registered name. Students may not think that this is an important right but many consequences flow from not

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being registered at birth which is why Plan International has led an international campaign on the issue, as explained in the text.

Human Rights – who enforces them?

If you break a country's law, you are liable to be caught and punished by the state. People in Britain are subject to British law not the law of, for example, France or Poland. And citizens of countries of the **European Union (EU)** must all obey European law as well. Ever since 1951, when six European countries got together, the EU has grown and developed in ways which help its member countries to trade easily and do many things together. The EU has courts of its own which can enforce certain laws which national courts cannot. And if a member country breaks one of the Human Rights laws which are contained in the European Convention on Human Rights, there is court for this in Strasbourg. Individuals can take a country (but not another individual) to court for breaching their human rights.

However, at the moment there is no world court enforcing the **United Nations Declaration of Human Rights** or the **UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child**. So if a child's rights are breached in, say, Africa, what can be done about it? Although there is a charter of human rights agreed by many of the African nations, there is as yet no court enforcing the charter, as there is in Europe. So this is a kind of international law that is still developing.

Article 7, the right to a legally registered name

For various reasons, including conflict, many children do not get registered at birth. This often prevents them from getting a proper education and other forms of official help. In Togo, for example, Plan conducted a survey which showed that 70% of babies do not get a birth certificate.

Togo is a small African country on the west coast. It had 5.5 million people in 2006. It is a mainly rural country. (image from Wikipedia)



There are many reasons why births go unregistered in Togo. Although it is 'free' for the first 30 days after a baby is born, the official stamp and paper certificate still costs about one US dollar. Even this small amount is too costly for

many parents. Koumealo, a 12-year-old girl said, "I don't have a birth certificate because my parents could not afford to pay for one." Other parents do not have the means to travel to the local government office as it is too far away.

Write Me Down

Many parents do not understand the importance of a birth certificate. Toyi, aged ten, revealed, "My father used it to roll a cigarette". Many have never been told how to register their new baby. Some are afraid of unfamiliar situations; as another boy said, "My father is scared of law courts and government officials."

The high rate of infant mortality is another factor. "None of my seven brothers and sisters has a birth certificate," said Yawa, 11. "Our parents decided not to register until we're older, as they don't want to waste time and money registering babies who might die at any moment."

Plan UK installs registration centers in the areas where it works and many thousands of children have now been registered since 2002.



Ac



This photograph was taken at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The man is Plan's country director for Bangladesh, Haider Yaqub. His colleague is Deepali Sood – her job is to link up with the European Parliament. They are meeting Glenys Kinnock, an MEP who is very interested in world affairs. She sits on the European Parliament's Development Committee. Europe is the world's biggest donor of aid.

In February 2008, Haider Yaqub of Plan Bangladesh spoke at a public hearing on birth registration organised by the Development Committee & Human Rights sub-committee in the European Parliament in Brussels. Mr Yaqub told the

European Parliament the vital importance of birth registration to developing countries and urged it to continue supporting Plan's global campaign.

 **Questions for discussion and research**

- ▶ George Bernard Shaw, was a famous playwright who said, "The greatest of evils and the worst of crimes is poverty". How far do you agree with him?
- ▶ Describe three or more ways in which human rights work can be carried out locally, nationally and internationally.

 **Research activities**

- ▶ Using the internet, find out more about the international campaign to get all children registered at birth: www.writemedown.org.
- ▶ Find out why the **World Health Organisation** has backed Plan's campaign for Universal birth registration.
- ▶ Find out what Archbishop Desmond Tutu said at the launch of Plan's campaign.
- ▶ Why is Desmond Tutu a highly respected figure in the world from a human rights point of view? Find out more about him and what he did in South Africa.
- ▶ The World Health Organisation is run by the United Nations. Why is it important to get the UN involved in a world campaign like this?

 **Further research**

- ▶ Find out what other roles the United Nations carries out in support of Human Rights.
- ▶ How are women's and children's rights given special attention in international law? Why do these groups sometimes lag behind in people's attention? Find out more by reading chapter 4, p123 and following of Plan's 2008 Report at www.becauseiamagirl.org.