Part 2:
Young people and violence, peer pressure and personal accountability

Summary of lesson

Preparation

In a world and society that are increasingly polarised, young people are often caught up in violence: from witnessing domestic violence to joining teenage gangs; and from living in societies dogged by violence due to drug turf wars to living in countries in the grip of ethnic or religious conflicts.

As students will have discovered in *"Ambiguities of identity in conflicts – Victim or perpetrator? To target or to protect?"*, the behaviour and treatment of individuals in conflict scenarios do not always correspond to expectations. For example, while some young people are the victims of violence, others may be perpetrators of violence.

In this lesson, students explore the human and social dynamics that can drive young people into a world of violence, and consider concepts such as group loyalty, peer pressure and the human desire to belong.

While these types of feelings are natural so is the tendency of societies to develop codes of conduct and ways of 'policing' compliance with those codes.

This lesson also allows students to explore some different codes of conduct that different groups in society develop; how young people learn the group rules that apply to them; the consequences of breaking these rules, and if and how young people's breaches of rules should be corrected.

> **This lesson also allows students to explore some different codes of conduct that different groups in society develop**

Students will also build on their general knowledge of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) from *"Ambiguities of identity in conflicts – Victim or perpetrator? To target or to protect?"* by learning about the international humiliatarian law rules that apply to children in conflict.

> **In this lesson, students explore the human and social dynamics that can drive young people into a world of violence**

Learning outcomes

Preparation

By the end of this lesson/series of lessons, the students should have a good understanding of:

• what personal emotions, social factors and/or wider circumstances could motivate children to use violence (whether in their immediate communities or in an armed conflict)

• young people's desire to belong to a group

• the impact of peer pressure

• spoken and unspoken codes of behaviour in groups and how these are enforced

• the importance of personal accountability

• the rules relating to children in conflict under IHL.

" The class-based exercises are designed to develop students' debating and presentation skills "

SKILLS

Students will develop their critical thinking skills and ability to explore other points of view by analysing how perceptions of children and their acts may vary depending on circumstances. By comparing scenarios from their immediate society with those of children in war-torn countries, students' ability to empathise with others should be enhanced. They should also develop an understanding that many human and social behavioural patterns are universal, and that their reactions and behaviour could be similar to those of the young people in the resources if their own circumstances were different.

The class-based exercises are designed to develop students' critical thinking, debating and presentation skills. The extension activities and project work are designed to develop their analytical, writing, presentation and reasoning skills.

Background information and legal principles/rules

Preparation

In this context, a child soldier is a child who has been recruited or used by an armed group in any capacity e.g. as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes.

IHL expressly specifies that children should benefit from certain protection and prohibits children under 15 from being recruited as soldiers (see below for more details). Nevertheless, in many countries children join armies and armed groups. Some children voluntarily take up arms and some are driven to by their circumstances. In many cases, warlords actively recruit *child soldiers* to increase their troop numbers, and as part of their strategy to gain and keep power.

To make sure children do not leave an armed group, officers or older soldiers often make them commit serious acts of violence, spy on their own or other communities or even act as sex slaves to officers. These types of acts can make it difficult for former *child soldiers* to reintegrate into society after a conflict.

As a result of reintegration problems, many former *child soldiers* grow up on the fringe of society and end up in a vicious circle of violence even after a conflict has finished. They may also suffer psychological problems long after a conflict because of the brutalities they may have witnessed or even participated in.

While the recruitment of *child soldiers* is prohibited and *child soldiers* are victims of war, it is also important to consider whether *child soldiers* can themselves commit acts which breach the principles of IHL. If so, should *child soldiers,* like other soldiers, be held *personally accountable* for these breaches?

Can child soldiers be tried for war crimes?

In practice, it is unlikely that any under 18s would be tried as prosecutors would be more interested in who recruited them. It is a requirement to prosecute the people who bear the "greatest responsibility".

Some international tribunals, such as the International Criminal Court, are limited to trying those over 18 but the Sierra Leone Tribunal has a minimum age of 15.

Should an accused aged between 15 and 18 appear before the court, it is required to consider the child's age and vulnerability, and the possibility of his or her reintegration into society.

The two international treaties referred to below deal with children in conflict.

***Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions on the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (1977),* states that:**

- the parties in a conflict must take all possible measures to prevent children under 15 from actively participating in any fighting

- it is prohibited to recruit children under 15 to take direct part in fighting

- when recruiting children between 15 and 18, governments should give priority to the oldest.

***Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions on the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (1977),* which deals with non-international armed conflicts (e.g. civil wars and armed uprisings), prohibits:**

- recruiting children under the age of 15

- active participation in fighting by children.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS:

http://www.ehl.icrc.org/images/stories/ explorations_pdfs/2c_law.pdf

Exercise 1

Two-part small group discussions based on **Home photos** and **Away photos** where students explore the issue of young people and violence in their immediate world and in formal conflicts.

TIMINGS: 45-50 minutes.

Divide the class in half: the "Home" half and the "Away" half and then divide each half into groups of four to six students.

PART A (10 minutes)

Give the "Home" group **Home photo (A)** and the "Away" group **Away photo (A),** as well as the **Trigger words** and **Trigger questions.** Ask each group to discuss the pictures using the **Trigger words** and **Trigger questions.** This will allow each group to explore issues such as friendship, camaraderie, belonging and a sense of identity. Encourage the students to relate the emotions and behaviour they associate with these photos back to their own experiences.

Suggestion!

The pictures used for this exercise are extracts from larger photos. If the groups start to explore the more sinister aspects of group behaviour, move on to **PART B** of this exercise.

Resources

For group use
1A. Home photo (A)
1B. Away photo (A)
1C. Trigger words
1D. Trigger questions

Words marked in **bold** are resources available to the teacher in this lesson pack.

Exercise 1

Exercises

PART B (15 minutes)

Give the "Home" group and the "Away" group the following additional materials:

"Home" group: **Home photo (B)** and **Rules and policing cards**

"Away" group: **Away photo (B)** and **From child to child soldier cards**

Ask the students to revisit their opinions of the photos and explore the more sinister side of group behaviour using the extra materials. Once again, encourage the students to relate their findings back to their own experiences.

"Home" groups

Using the **Rules and policing cards,** the students should explore: when and how children learn the rules of behaviour/codes of conduct of their group; how groups set rules and police compliance with these rules; and how young people should be corrected when they breach rules.

Suggestion!

While some students may have direct experience of violence and gangs, others may not immediately see that groups can encourage more aggressive behaviour. These students can be directed to the following scenarios which may be more familiar: behaviour in sports (e.g. on the pitch, a group of fans etc.) or the behaviour of cliques of friends. In each case, suggest the students think about how group members act among themselves and how they treat 'outsiders', and how these groups set and police their 'rules'. In this context, 'rules' can relate to simple things like dress code or what they call each other as well as issues such as group loyalty.

"Away" groups

Using the **From child to child soldier cards,** the students should explore why young people have become involved in fighting. In particular, the card with the speech bubbles will allow students to consider a range of emotions and circumstances that may cause children voluntarily or involuntarily to take up arms or take part in an armed conflict in another way (e.g. spying, carrying messages or transporting explosives). Encourage students to discuss whether such motivations are noble or misguided. Using the question card, the students should explore what rules an armed group and society may impose on child soldiers, and how such rules are enforced. Also, the students should think about whether child soldiers should be punished for any breaches of IHL, and if so, how?

Resources

For group use
2A. Home photo (B)
2B. Away photo (B)
2C. Rules and policing cards
2D. From child to child soldier cards
2E. Story behind the pictures

Exercise 1

PART C (20 minutes)

To wrap up the lesson, organise a plenary feedback session. Circulate additional copies of the 'Home' and 'Away' materials so each student has the full set. One student from each group can summarise the group's conclusions or issues that they feel are ambiguous or controversial.

Suggestion!

Students may highlight issues about which they have not been able to reach conclusions. As the subject matter of this lesson involves complex issues, it does not lend itself to simple answers. It is important for students to realise there are often grey areas with no easy answers.

As part of this feedback session, ask the students to consider the **"Who is old enough to fight?"** questionnaire e.g. by a show of hands. Test the students' answers against the rules applicable under IHL (see Background information and legal principles/rules on page 4) and, for the fourth question, against the law in the UK. In particular, the armed forces in the UK can recruit young people from the age of 16 but cannot send them into active combat until they are 18.

Optional additional class-based task or extension activity

As part of the small group's feedback, each group could contribute a couple of principles to a "Charter on the principles of warfare" with respect to children in conflict. These principles could include their thoughts on:

• whether a child can actively take part in fighting

 and if so,

• from what age they think a child may actively take part in fighting.

(See *"Ambiguities of identity in conflicts – Victim or perpetrator? To target or to protect?"* for more guidance on this extension activity.)

Resources

For group use
1A. Home photo (A)
1B. Away photo (A)
1C. Trigger words
2A. Home photo (B)
2B. Away photo (B)
2C. Rules and policing cards
2D. From child to child soldier cards
2F. "Who is old enough to fight?" questionnaire

For use in class
Flip chart sheets/A3 sheets which students can use to note ideas to assist with giving feedback during the plenary session or for contributing to the "Charter on the principles of warfare".

![BritishRedCross]

Extensions

Extensions ➤

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS/HOMEWORK OPPORTUNITIES

Resources

Extension activity: Course glossary

Students should continue to work on the Course glossary as described in *"Ambiguities of identity in conflicts – Victim or perpetrator? To target or to protect?"*

For group use
3A. Take-away materials
3B. "It could have been me..."

Project opportunity: "It could have been me..."

Allow each student to choose one of the **"It could have been me..." scenarios** from category A or B and ask them to produce a piece of work in which they:

• category A: explore the circumstances and emotions of individuals described in the resource that led them to take direct part in the hostilities and relate these emotions and circumstances back to a conflict scenario in their own life; or

• category B: analyse how the behaviour and/or psychology described in the resource is similar to the behaviour and/or psychology used by people recruiting children or to force the children to stay with the armed group once recruited.

The work can be a written piece (e.g. an article, a letter to a friend, a poem), art work (e.g. a collage) or a media project (e.g. a video or sound recording). It could even be a piece of work using music, dance or another performing art. The choice of medium can depend on the students' skills and interest, and can be used to present the results of having explored personal experiences in a unique but anonymous way.

Sample ideas

The resource about bullying can be used to explore the tactics used by a warlord to coerce child soldiers to use violence. A testimonial by a child soldier about using violence to protect or avenge his/her family can be related back to a scenario where the student's own family or friends were threatened or intimidated.

The students do not need to look for a scenario in their life that necessarily resulted in the use of violence. The students can pick potential conflict scenarios to explore the emotions they felt and the strength of character they needed to resist a violent response or to resist giving in to group pressure.

Part 2: Resources

Resources

LESSON PLANNING

For teachers' use

Lesson flowchart
Key principles

EXERCISE 1, PART A

For group use

1A. Home photo (A)
1B. Away photo (A)
1C. Trigger words
1D. Trigger questions

EXERCISE 1, PART B

For group use

2A. Home photo (B)
2B. Away photo (B)
2C. Rules and policing cards
2D. From child to child soldier cards
2E. Story behind the picture

EXERCISE 1, PART C:

For group use

1A. Home photo (A)
1B. Away photo (A)
1C. Trigger words
2A. Home photo (B)
2B. Away photo (B)
2C. Rules and policing cards
2D. From child to child soldier cards
2F. "Who is old enough to fight?" questionnaire

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES' RESOURCES

For teachers' and students' use

3A. Take-away materials
3B. "It could have been me..."

Lesson flowchart

Resources

5 mins	Introduction, divide the class in half, the 'Home' and 'Away' halves. Further divide each half into groups of 4-6 students and give instructions about the exercise.

PART A

10 mins	The groups discuss their **Home photo (A)** and **Away photo (A)** respectively, based on the **Trigger questions** and **Trigger words**

PART B

15 mins	'Home' group to discuss **Home photo (B)** based on the **Rules and policing cards.** 'Away' group to discuss **Group photo (B)** based on the **From child to child soldier cards.**

PART C

15 mins	Each group to give feedback in a class discussion based on **"Who is old enough to fight?" questionnaire** and teacher feedback. Optional activity: each group to suggest a principle for a **"Charter on the principles of warfare".**

Key principles

ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL I TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS ON THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF INTERNATIONAL ARMED CONFLICTS (1977)

- The parties in a conflict must take all possible measures to prevent children under 15 from actively participating in any fighting.
- It is prohibited to recruit children under 15 to take direct part in fighting.
- When recruiting children between 15 and 18, governments should give priority to the oldest.

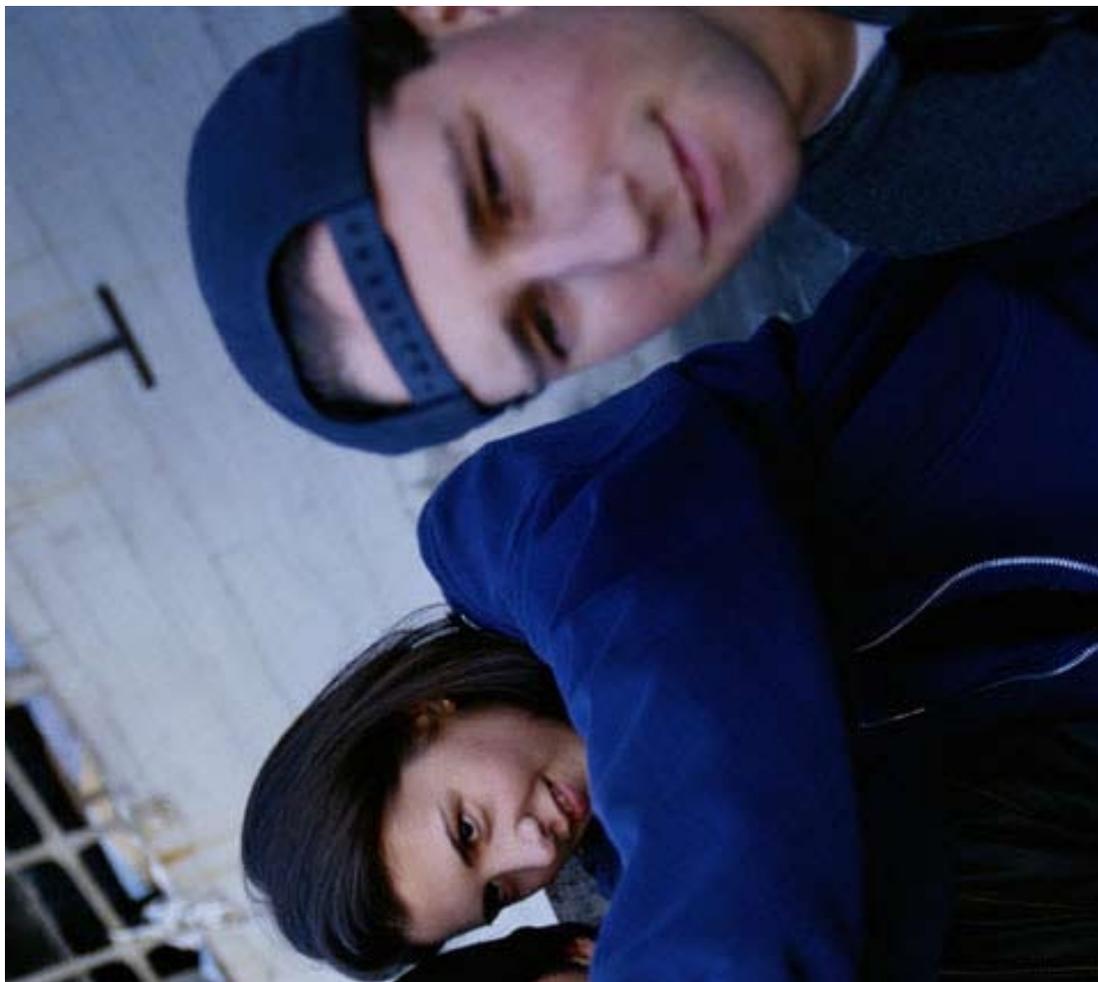**These principles apply in international armed conflicts.**

ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL II TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS ON THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS OF NON-INTERNATIONAL ARMED CONFLICTS (1977)

- It is prohibited to recruit children under the age of 15.
- Active participation in fighting by children is prohibited.

These principles apply in non-international armed conflicts (e.g. civil wars).

1A. Home photo A

Resources

Doug Menuez

in partnership with
ALLEN & OVERY
Justice and Fairness | Exploring justice and fairness as part of international humanitarian law

1B. Away photo A

CIRC/SPAULL, John

1C. Trigger words

Resources

What concepts does this picture suggest to you and why?

Friendship

Having fun

Danger

Fear

Camaraderie

Laughter

Importance

Status

Team

Safety

Loyalty

Power

Belonging

Responsibility

Rules

Family

Identity

Acceptance

Roles

You can add more words or phrases that you feel are appropriate.

1D. Trigger questions

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

- What types of groups exist for young people?

- What groups do you belong to e.g. class, football team, choir, band?

- How does being part of these groups make you feel?

- Does peer pressure make you join groups?

- Does the group pressure make you feel/behave differently?

- Do you prefer to be in a group or on your own?

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

- I enjoy belonging to my [*group*] because it makes me feel...
  but I don't always like belonging to this group because...

2A. Home photo B

Resources

Doug Menuez

2B. Away photo B

CIRC/SPAULL, John

2C. Rules and policing card 1   📁 **Resources**

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

- What do you think of this group now?

- How many of the words that you marked for the extract apply to the whole picture?

- Why have you made these changes to the selected list of words?

GROUP BEHAVIOUR

- At what age do you think young people learn the rules/codes of behaviour of their group/society?

- How do groups/society set out their rules?

- How do groups/society 'police' these rules? What kind of mechanisms do they have?

- How should groups/society react to/correct/punish young people if they breach these rules?

2C. Rules and policing card 2

Resources

Family

School

Team

Society

Understanding

ASBOs

Punishment

Laws

Shame and embarrassment

Imprisonment

Warnings

Expulsion

Penalties

Fear

Codes of conduct

Rules

Respect

Detention

Fines

You can add more words or phrases that you feel are appropriate.

in partnership with
ALLEN & OVERY
Justice and Fairness | Exploring justice and fairness as part of international humanitarian law

2D. From child to child soldier card 1

Resources

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

- What do you think of this group now?

- Why might children use violence in a conflict situation?

- When might a child's use of violence be justified in a conflict situation?

- When does a child stop being perceived as a 'child using violence' and become a 'child soldier'?

- At what age do you think children stop being a child and become an adult?

- Should children be allowed to fight at all?

- At what age do you think children should be allowed to fight?

- Are child soldiers subject to rules and, if so, which ones e.g. rules of the armed group, country's law and/or international law?

- How might armed groups/society set out their rules?

- How might armed groups/society 'police' these rules? What kind of mechanisms might they have?

- Should society correct/punish child soldiers if they breach these rules? If so, how?
  If not, how might society react to child soldiers?

2D. From child to child soldier card 2

Resources

Why did we take an active part in hostilities?

Loneliness

Peer pressure

Boredom

Pride

Loyalty

Friendship

Hunger

Belonging

Revenge

Safety

Loss of family

Homes

Respect

Camaraderie

You can add more words or phrases that you feel are appropriate.

2E. Story behind the picture

HOME PHOTO

In this photo, one of the boys is teaching the girl to aim a gun. It is part of a collection of photos taken by Doug Menuez showing these three young people hanging around a disused railway, playing with the gun.

AWAY PHOTO

This photo shows young combatants of the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone in 1996. During the war, many children were abducted from their villages and press-ganged into fighting. They were given drugs, such as cocaine, to dull their senses and give them courage to fight. These child soldiers may have killed and maimed civilians, cleared mines and constantly faced injury and death.

In 2002, the war was declared over and the children began to come home. But they have not always received a warm welcome and have faced many problems. Many of these young people are now helped by the Red Cross child advocacy and rehabilitation (CAR) programme. The Sierra Leone Red Cross is currently helping 1,200 children affected by war including:

- helping them deal with their trauma through counselling and organised activities

- reintegrating them into society by providing them with education and training to give them greater independence, increase household income and improve living conditions.

For stories from children in Sierra Leone see:
http://www.redcross.org.uk

2F. Who is old enough to fight?   Resources

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Should young people be allowed to take part in armed fighting?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you think there should be a minimum age for young people to:

• join the armed forces
• take part in fighting?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you think a person under the minimum age should be allowed to volunteer to take part in fighting?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you know what the law is in the UK about young people joining the armed forces?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3A. Take-away materials

TAKE-AWAY MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS

Students can collate their own research and resources based on the output of the class-based exercises and extension activities e.g. the Course glossary of terms related to armed conflicts and a Charter on the principles of warfare.

For revision purposes, the following resources can be shared.

Course glossary, see:

"Ambiguities of identity in conflicts – Victim or perpetrator? To target or to protect?"

Basic principles of IHL, see:

"Ambiguities of identity in conflicts – Victim or perpetrator? To target or to protect?"

The following summary of IHL with respect to children in conflict:

http://www.ehl.icrc.org/images/stories/explorations_pdfs/2c_ihl.pdf

3B. "It could have been me..."   📁 **Resources**

RESEARCH SOURCES

"It could have been me..." resources

The case study "Class act – You or your brother"

http://www.redcross.org.uk/education

The materials from "I don't want to go back" and "Voices from children"

Downloadable from the EHL website *(Exploration 2C: Focus on child soldiers)*.
Where these resources include video footage, students could access these at school or local libraries.

http://www.ehl.icrc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=141&Itemid=164

Extracts from "Why young people join gangs and what you can do"

In particular: the four points under General reasons for gang membership and gang recruitment tactics

http://www.violencepreventioninstitute.org/youngpeople.html

Tips and advice for bullies

http://www.bullyfreecampaign.sg

Testimonial of a bully on

http://www.bbc.co.uk/switch/slink/sexlovelife/reallife/i_was_a_bully.shtml

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