

SOLVE INITIATIVE

iSCAN
International Security & Conflict Analysis Network



CONTEXT



IMPACT OF CONFLICTS ON CHILDREN

The impact of violence and conflicts on young people is one of the impediments to peace and security in the world. One area that has received insufficient attention is the impact of trauma experienced by children. Children encounter horrific scenes and conditions in times of armed conflicts and crisis situations.

In a continental study (African Union, Study on the impact of conflict and crises on children in Africa) on the impact of conflict and crises on children in Africa conducted by the African Union, it was found that the desire for revenge among the children was observed. Worse still was the encouragement of revenge by the mothers. This demonstrates the vicious cycle of armed conflict, in which the victims may become violators themselves, making it extremely difficult to stop the conflict.

Every estimate of direct conflict deaths suggests that more than 90% of all casualties occur among young adult males (UNFPA, State of World Population 2015, p.21). Before the conflict in Syria, nearly every child was enrolled in primary school but by 2013 about 1.8 million children and adolescents were out of school. It took just two years of civil war to erase all education progress made since the start of the century. Today, some 50% of the 1.4 billion people living in countries impacted by crises and fragility are under the age of 20. (OECD report on States of Fragility, 2015, available at <http://goo.gl/X1KnOe>). During conflict, weakened institutions, poverty and financial hardship leave adolescent girls vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and violence (including risky livelihoods). (Women's Refugee Commission, 2014, available at <http://bit.ly/1J666EM>). According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), there is a big gap within the humanitarian community at large in collecting data on youth affected by conflict. (UNHCR, 2015)



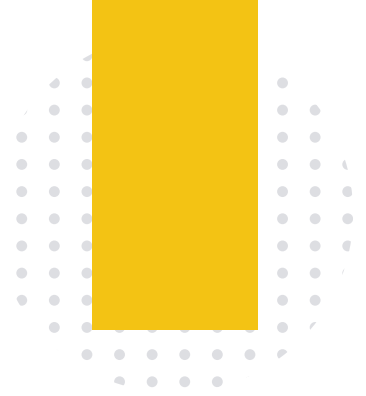
INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The 2016 joint report entitled 'Working Together for Peace: Synergies and Connectors for Implementing the 2015 UN Reviews' (Joint report on Working Together for Peace: Synergies and Connectors for Implementing the 2015 UN Reviews, available at <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/IPI-Rpt-Synergies.pdf>) stressed that in a multi-stakeholder world, most threats to peace and security are driven from below and cannot be solved by governments alone. The state is a necessary but not a sufficient partner in this endeavor, particularly if it is weak, absent from certain parts of its territory, captured by elites, or not trusted by its people.

According to UNHCR, 68.5 million persons were forcefully displaced as a consequence of conflicts, violence and persecution at the end of 2017. UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017 (UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017, available at http://www.un-dp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Youth/UNDP_Youth-Strategy-2014-17_Web.pdf) states that over 600 million youth live in fragile and conflict-affected countries and territories.

Realizing the above challenges, the international community, including the United Nations Children's Fund, Non-governmental organizations such as Save the Children, and other humanitarian groups have taken action to address the impact of conflicts on children and help them build a better life.

On 9 December 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted unanimously a historic and ground-breaking resolution on Youth, Peace and Security which recognizes that "young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security". Resolution 2250 (UN Security Council Resolution 2250, available at <http://unoy.org/wp-content/uploads/SCR-2250.pdf>) was the first resolution fully dedicated to the important and positive role young women and men play in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.



The 2018 independent study (The missing peace, available at <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/youth/youth-web-english.pdf>) on youth, peace and security found that the work of young people on peace and security – across different phases of conflict, types of violence and regions of the world – is vital:

If the right investments are made in the positive resilience of youth, and their peacebuilding work is recognized and nurtured, societies may reap a significant peace dividend.

This study argues that this is the critical “missing peace”.

The study argues that realizing this peace dividend requires a commitment to ensuring that youth initiatives, organizations and individuals can operate in an environment that values and respects them, rather than one that controls or represses them. This can be achieved by providing the political, financial, legal and social means for optimizing and multiplying young people’s initiatives so that they may fully reach their potential to contribute to peace and security in their societies. Young women and men in general, and those investing in peace and the prevention of violence specifically, should be seen as indispensable allies in the quest for peace and security.

The study further makes the case that the prevention approach demands that governments and international organizations prioritize support for, and investment in, the positive resilience of the majority of young people, rather than exclusively reacting to the risk represented by just a few.

The study provided recommendations for societies and countries to fully harness and support the innovation of young people’s contributions to peace and to begin to work towards the ‘seismic’ changes. The following recommendations are relevant to iSCAN:



- **Acknowledge** and highlight the positive work of young women and men working on peace and security through the allocation of awards, grants and honours.
- **Support** the establishment or strengthening of national, regional and global youth peace networks – online and offline – for young people and their organizations to connect; organize for action; and exchange experiences, knowledge and resources.
- **Prioritize** capacity-building within their own organizations, for government employees and development aid professionals, by engaging young leaders and members of youth organizations in training and sensitization sessions on youth, peace and security.
- **Strengthen** the field of professionalized peace studies through interdisciplinary research and teaching curriculum at tertiary educational institutions, as well as through non-formal and informal educational initiatives, both online and
- **Prioritize** knowledge-sharing and exchange of information with youth organizations, community leaders and members of civil society to assist young people's work on peace and security, enhance collaboration and eliminate overlap.
- **Prioritize** the creation of youth, peace and security coalitions to ensure a collective impact on youth, peace and security at local, national, regional and global levels. Such coalitions should be multisectoral and cross-cutting partnerships between young people; youth organizations; and multilateral, government and civil society actors, including the private sector, religious communities, private foundations and educational
- **Prioritize** opportunities for young refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, and young people from host communities, to share their peace and security challenges through inter-generational dialogue and consultative forums, and to take part in decision-making processes to ensure that their needs are addressed.



THE SOLVE INITIATIVE

‘SOLVE’ INITIATIVE

In recognition of the above, iSCAN is well positioned to contribute to ensuring that young people in conflict-affected settings and communities are empowered and put at the center of conflict prevention. Through its ‘Solve’ Initiative, iSCAN is building a community of high-impact young conflict solvers (Solvers) at the forefront of conflict prevention and maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Their work towards bringing about solutions are made possible by concerned members of the international community (Solve Enablers) with vested interest in eliminating violent conflicts and their impacts on young people. Solve is about finding solutions that are local, verifiable and measurable, and empowers the most affected members of communities. Solve is a community of people like you. People who aspire to go beyond making a change to creating solutions for global violent conflicts through learning, empowering, engaging and taking concrete actions. Solutions to end the impacts of violent conflicts on young people start with you. You are the “Solver” and the “Solve Enabler”

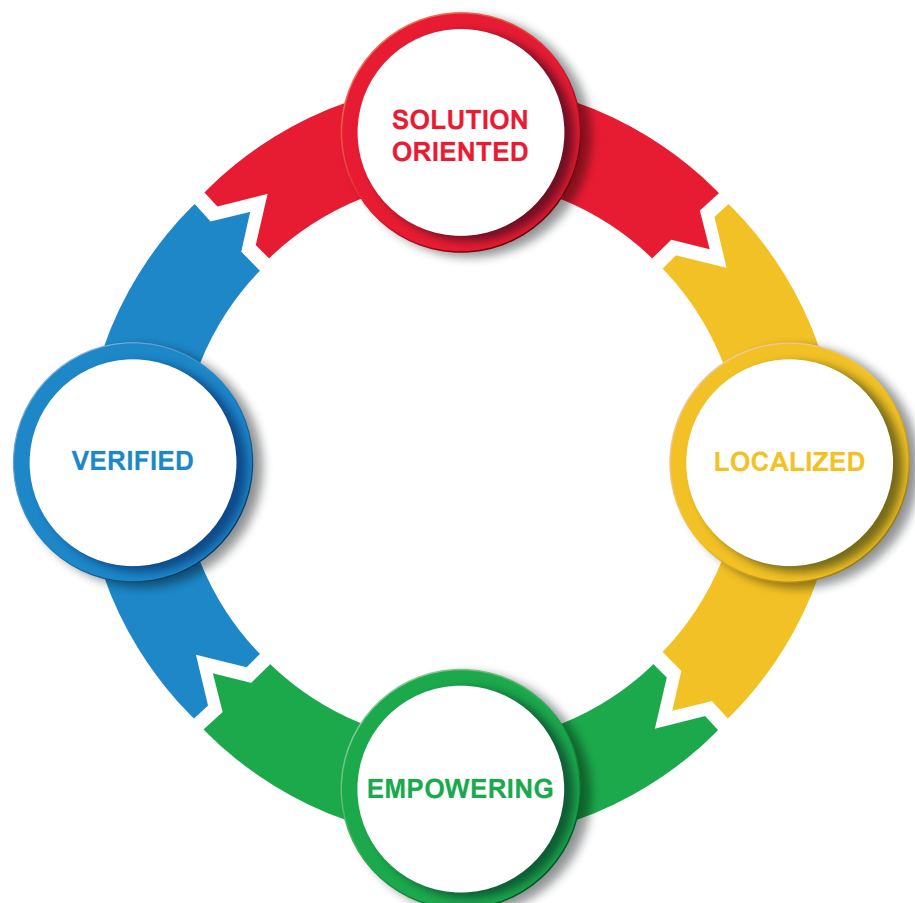


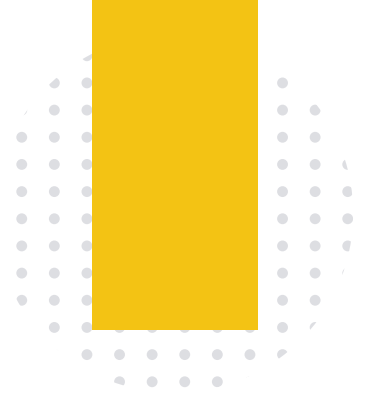
VISION

A world in which young people live free from violent conflicts.

OBJECTIVES

The Solve Initiative aims to ensure that peace and security are maintained through active engagement of young people (Solvers) and concerned members of the international community (Solve Enablers) with solution oriented, localized, verifiable, and empowering approach.





IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVE, THE SOLVE INITIATIVE WILL:

- **Identify** youth with high-impact potential to carry out initiatives aimed at resolving conflicts in their settings and communities.
- **Build** knowledge and capacity in understanding the nature and impacts of the conflicts they are faced with and tools to design solutions by providing scholarships to participate in iSCAN's conflict management training.
- **Provide** a platform for connecting with other Solvers to exchange experience and knowledge (e.g. activities to deconstruct them from the problems, a peer support to talk to about their experience).
- **Provide** a supporting system (mentorship/guidance) from conflict management experts.
- **Provide** a platform for connecting with role models and other people with vested interest in resolving conflicts.
- **'Solvers'** participation in national, regional and international forums on peace and security.
- **Identify** other capacity building and knowledge development opportunities on conflict management, human rights and development.
- **Facilitate** information sharing and information access.
- **Connect** 'Solvers' with other young people from around the world.
- **Mobilize** support from local stakeholders (governments, international organizations, civil society groups, academics, and the private sector) to support 'Solvers' peace initiatives in their settings.

EXPECTED IMPACT

- For affected the youth **(immediate impact)**: Youths are provided with an alternative to conflict and given a purpose to rebuild their lives, heal their traumas caused by conflicts, and be part of bringing about
- For the affected communities and country **(short term impact)**: Resilient communities are created and an environment free of violent conflicts and conditions conducive to peace, security and development in the country are established.
- For the affected region **(medium term impact)**: Peace in the region is created, allowing societies free from violent conflicts and conditions conducive to peace, security and development in the region.
- For the international community **(long term impact)**: Global peace and security is maintained, contributing to the implementation of international instruments such as resolution 2250 and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.



THE 'SOLVE' STORY



iSCAN's Founder, Billy Batware is from Rwanda, where he lived through the civil war and the genocide until he was 13 years old in July 1994. Having experienced the violent conflict and its consequences first-hand, he fled to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), then Zaire, where he lived as a refugee. In a DRC refugee camp, Billy volunteered

for the United Agency responsible for refugees, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and met aid workers who supported him and other refugees. This was a life-changing experience that marked the beginning of what would be Billy's peacebuilding work. In the refugee camp, he helped UNHCR in providing the much-needed support to him and other refugees in the camp. In doing so, he witnessed acts of humanity and found a purpose that helped him to cope with the experience of the conflict and the difficult environment he was living in.

Over the course of his life as a refugee, Billy's main source of existence and healing was education which was made possible by the support provided by humanitarian groups. In schools and helping others, he found a place of safety and a purpose. Fast forward, Billy became an education and peace activist during his studies and went on to found three education Non-Governmental Organizations to empower young people through education. iSCAN is one of them. As a certified trainer, Billy has since trained over 300 people from all over the world on conflict management and intervention strategies.

Now working for the United Nations, Billy is a living example of what is possible when the right support is provided to the most vulnerable of this group. The support he received from different individuals and groups played a critical role in his healing

and personal as well as professional development. Inspired by the story of the young boy in a refugee camp and the many testimonies about how the people he has trained make use of the skills and knowledge they gained, Billy came up with the idea of supporting other young people like he was supported when he was in a refugee camp at the tender age of 13 and throughout his journey as a refugee. From his own experience, Billy understood that if other young people affected by conflicts can be provided with an effective supporting mechanism, they can make a vital contribution to conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace and security in their communities, countries, regions and around the world.

Most importantly, they can find purpose in their lives, and rather than live with traumatic conditions and impacts of conflicts, they can heal from the conflicts' wound and become the core of peacebuilding efforts.

That is the role of 'Solve!' To identify young people with potential for high impact and empower them to solve conflicts and contribute to maintaining peace and security in their communities.





**INSIGHTFUL VOICES
FROM YOUTH
AFFECTED BY
CONFLICT**

The following quotes were taken from a UNESCO study “Will you listen?” Young voices from the conflict zones. (UNESCO study “Will you listen?” Young voices from the conflict zones: https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Will_You_Listen_eng.pdf)

“NGO/UN have been working in our areas, supporting us. They are all leaving too soon, and this is making everything worse.”

“We want to reach out and help other children, in our communities, children from other parts of the conflict, or children in other countries. We want you to support our groups, organizations, networks and parliaments in our work and our efforts to contribute to change. We want more opportunities to take part in making decisions that affect us. We ask that you empower us and our organizations – our youth councils, networks, groups and organizations, children’s parliaments and other youth-driven groups – to be able to participate in a way that counts in all decisions that affect us. We do not want to be called in when you have already made the decisions. We want to work hand in hand with you.”

“We feel and understand what’s happening, so we want to do something to change it.”


“Joining violence is sometimes the only way to survive and protect our families. We need another way.”

“We want programmes to heal our minds from the trauma of the experiences we have been through and to keep us away from violence, drugs and other crimes. These programmes and services must give all of us greater opportunities to play and participate in recreational pursuits like sports, cultural and other non-formal activities. We want these programmes to last long enough to give us an opportunity to rebuild our lives.”

“Those of us who make it to refugee camps and other settlements often find ourselves treated without any respect. We sometimes lose hope and wonder why the world fails to understand or accept us.”

“Those of us who try to live in a new culture feel unwelcome. People in the host communities sometimes say we are not fit to play with their children. Even the teachers in the schools sometimes refuse to teach us or to treat us the same as the local kids. Some of us even feel like going back to our communities to join the fighting forces, just to feel like we belong somewhere.”



“Many of us are giving up our time and energy without expecting compensation. All we want is real change so that what we have been through does not happen to the generations to come.”



“We want to be part of peace and reconciliation in our communities. We have ideas to push peace forward. We want to sit with you and discuss how to reconcile our communities, rebuild and develop our countries.”

“Those of us who are old enough want to get jobs, but these wars deprive us of opportunities to get the training we need to get them. When organizations come into our communities, they assume they know what skills we want. So many of us end up learning the same thing and find that our new trade is not useful in our community. Why don't you ask us what we need?”

“We are often used to make war, but almost never included in making peace.”



“In some of our countries, sexual violence is so widespread it has become normalized. People accept it as part of everyday life, something they can't do anything about. What kind of a world are we living in if we accept rape as normal?”



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