

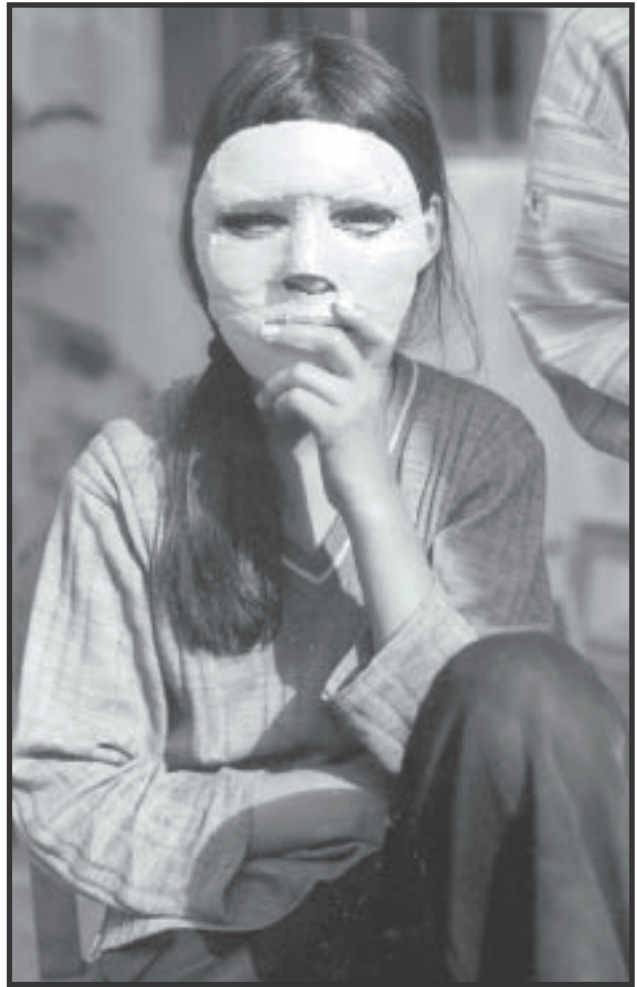
INTRODUCTION

This manual is dedicated to young peacebuilders around the world. It contains information, techniques and project ideas to support your struggles to bring peace to your homes, communities and countries.

The materials in this book were developed through the *Children/Youth as Peacebuilders Project (CAP)*. CAP is a partnership amongst young people from six countries where there is war or war has recently ended. Our countries are: Angola, Bosnia, Burma-Thai border, Cambodia, Colombia and Uganda. We are refugees, students, internally displaced people, former child soldiers, political activists, community workers, youth church leaders and human rights educators. For most of us war has been a fact of life all our lives. Each of us has been affected in distinct ways by the conflicts in our countries. Though we have had quite different experiences, we still hold many beliefs in common.

We are committed to the reordering of our societies and the development of peaceful relationships amongst people. We want to live in a world where human rights are respected while recognizing that each group will have distinct ways of putting those rights into practise. We realize that conflict is a part of human life but insist that violence increases rather than resolves problems.

We are working for a world that invites the participation of all citizens, including children and youth. Our vision includes a just and equitable sharing of resources and opportunities for all people to be educated through formal school systems as well as learning from our elders.



We want a world where play, romance and enjoyment of our cultures are cherished parts of daily life. We are working to create a world filled with possibilities.

These are big dreams but ones we believe can be realized. We know war's destructive power. We understand that there are no miracles around the corner, that it is necessary to work hard to accomplish the smallest of goals. But we are ready and eager to use our energies for positive change and a better future for the young people in our country. We invite you to join us.

CAP



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CAP GROUPS:

ANGOLA: IECA CHURCH AND MOJUP, YOUTH MOVEMENT FOR PEACE.

MOJUP contains eight youth peace unities in Huambo and Huile Provinces. Each unity has a membership of approximately 20 – 30 youth. For political reasons MOJUP is under the auspices of IECA Church but includes young people from other groups and churches. During the conflict MOJUP had approximately 120 members. With the signing of the peace accord MOJUP has participated in collaborations with other groups and its membership has increased substantially.

BOSNIA: SUNCE

SUNCE is an organization of high school youth in Zvornick, in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina. It has approximately 350 members, mostly from the local high schools. The programs of this youth-only group are designed to provide alternatives for adolescents who have become disaffected and angry because of their depressed living conditions.

BURMA-THAILAND: CAP BURMA-THAI

This is an affiliation of seven refugee youth and ethnic organizations based in Thailand. The core membership has approximately 20 young people who are representatives of groups with much larger memberships.

CAMBODIA: CAMP

CAMP is a youth volunteer collective that works on children's rights issues. Its core membership is approximately 15. Over the past year CAMP has established a coalition of children and youth groups titled CYP (Children and Youth for Peace). Members in this coalition include the Students Executive Committee (SEC) (university students in Phnom Penh), Women Peacemakers (WPM) (Phnom Penh), Children's Club (Rattanak Mondul), Children's Club (Kandal Stung).

COLOMBIA: TALLER DE VIDA

Taller de Vida is a national NGO that works with displaced children and youth. It organizes a range of programs for young people living on the outskirts of Bogota as well as with Afro-Colombians and indigenous groups outside the capital area.

UGANDA: WORLD VISION GULU REHABILITATION CENTRE

This centre has provided support for over 5,000 returned child soldiers. More recently it has been working to develop an outreach program to support the re-integration of these young people into their communities.



WHAT IS CAP?

CAP stands for Children/Youth as Peacebuilders. We are a network of young people living in conflict and post-conflict situations who are working to uphold the rights of war affected young people.

CAP believes that young people have an important role to play in peacebuilding efforts and the promotion of peace both in our countries and at the regional and international level.

CAP combines local work with regional and international consultations of young people and adults so that we can learn from each other and develop ideas for policies and programs to support war affected children and youth throughout the world.

CAP is a relationship amongst equals. Each group receives the same level of resources. We value knowledge gained through experience and debates with others doing similar work.

CAP is committed to the support of local initiatives. However, we also understand that we can learn from others living in similar situations. We are committed to the full participation of females and males and the recognition of the different experiences and needs of boys and girls in conflict situations.

CAP is a network of youth organizations, national and international NGOS and church groups from Angola, Bosnia, Burma-Thailand, Cambodia, Colombia and Uganda. We are hoping to increase our membership to other countries soon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the many individuals and organizations that have supported us in our work.

First and foremost we want to express our gratitude to the Canadian International Development Agency. Their support has made CAP possible. We thank them for their vote of confidence in young people and their belief in our skills, commitment and talents. In the Peacebuilding Unit, Suehila Elkateb has been a trusted colleague and advisor. Gail Cockburn is an honorary member of CAP - working with her at the Winnipeg Conference was a delight.

In Canada we want to thank our advisory committee for their support and advice. This includes Les Horne, DCI-Canada, Senator Landon Pearson and Henriette Thompson, World Vision Canada.

In each country CAP has worked with different individuals and organizations. We have learned a great deal through these collaborations.

In Angola, MOJUP benefited from contact with Development Workshop and the support of IECA Church. In Bosnia, CARE Bosnia provided assistance for SUNCE while respecting the group's independence and need to make its own decisions. CAP Burma-Thailand has been supported in many ways by the Burma Relief Centre. World Vision and the Children's Rights Foundation have been trusted friends and colleagues of CAMP in Cambodia. CAMP values this connection and the many opportunities it has provided for its work.

In Colombia, the youth at Taller de Vida have had the opportunity to work with many organizations inside the Coalición Colombia - we thank them for their support and look forward to working together in the future. In Uganda, CAP's home has been with World Vision and particularly the Gulu Children's Rehabilitation Centre. And as every visitor or resident of the Centre knows, Charles' smile makes all things seem possible!

We hope to be able to work with you in the future and thank you for your support.



“Capacity building is one of the most important things for building peace. Young people need to have the skills and knowledge to understand their situation if they are going to work for peace.

Peace needs to be inside ourselves as well as in our communities and countries. As peacebuilders, we must practice the principles that we are talking about. We don't have to wait until we have democracy in our countries. We can start now and we need to start now.

We know that the conditions can make this difficult. Our activities and ideas can be very logical but sometimes we cannot put them into practice. But if we have a good understanding of the situation and the problems that people are facing or have faced then we can work on these problems, we can encourage people to work for peace.”

USING THIS GUIDE

This manual is designed for both new and experienced young peacebuilders. It is based on our efforts to bring peace to our countries and communities. Most topics include more questions than definitive statements – absolute answers are rare in this work.

Three main points have determined the organization of this manual and what we have to offer.

The first is the recognition that every conflict situation is distinct and therefore creates particular needs and opportunities. No one response suits all conflict situations. This manual contains a variety of ideas, tools and techniques. We are offering possibilities rather than a formula for doing peacebuilding work.

We don't claim to be experts in conflict transformation. However, we can speak from the authority of our experiences as victims of war and as agents for change. In developing this manual we realized that it was impossible to include every peacebuilding issue. Our choices are based on discussions at the CAP international meetings where we identified the skills and knowledge we think are essential for youth peacebuilders.

We believe that young people can and should have an important role in peacebuilding and the restoration of their communities. We know this can be dangerous work. The photographs of masked youth in this manual underline the constant need for security. But these masks confirm another fact – that for every obstacle there is a solution and our determination to bring peace to our countries cannot be stopped.

Section One: Learning from the Ground Up: Personal Accounts & Background Information

This section contains a combination of first-hand accounts and background information. In our struggles for social justice it is useful to know what is happening to our brothers and sisters in other countries. This helps us to understand the connections between our situations and, through that, ways we can support each other. The background information is linked to issues arising from these different situations.

Section Two: Tools for Community Work

This is the manual's toolkit with discussions, ideas and techniques on community research, organizational questions and youth's participation in local peacebuilding. This section is based on lessons we have learned from our work.

Section Three: Working For Change: Children/Youth as Peacebuilders

This section outlines CAP's peacebuilding projects. Included with these descriptions are discussions and interviews as youth reflect on the methods, difficulties and accomplishments of their work.

