



## **Unit: CRISIS**

### Lesson: Realities of War

#### **Time:**

4-5 hours

#### **Objectives & Skills:**

Students will conduct research in world events to become more knowledgeable about a current war of their choosing. They will apply a United Nations report to their analysis of their research; and they'll use critical thinking to synthesize information necessary to strategize ways for young people to help prevent war.

#### **Materials:**

- Internet and current newspapers and news magazines
- Butcher paper/chalk board/overhead
- [Handout](#)

#### **Preparations:**

Teachers: Print and read the relevant sections of the "Impact of Armed Conflict on Children" from [www.unicef.org/graca](http://www.unicef.org/graca)

#### **Internet Links:**

- [www.unicef.org/initiative](http://www.unicef.org/initiative)
- [www.turnerlearning.com/cnn/soldiers](http://www.turnerlearning.com/cnn/soldiers)
- [www.warchild.org/projects/projects.html](http://www.warchild.org/projects/projects.html)
- [www.c-r.org/acc\\_moz/contents\\_moz.htm](http://www.c-r.org/acc_moz/contents_moz.htm)

Although the STA travelers did not see warfare themselves, they certainly saw some of its effects. They drove along roads that were notorious for their landmines, and they saw people maimed and disfigured by the weapons that were in use during Mozambique's civil war. Dan, of course, was to see much more of these awful consequences of war when he would work in Somalia. These same weapons and conditions of war are of particular concern to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), because of their devastating effects on children, in particular.

Many areas of the world are engaged in war-civil and otherwise-and are therefore subject to their own political, geographic and climatic conditions. Still, the most enduring effects of war are the same all over the world. These are the effects of war on the succeeding generations.

## Premeditation:

Imagine that the state in which you live is at war with another state. Generate ideas about how teenagers would be affected by the war in its initial stages; how their lives might be immediately changed; and then how they might be affected as the conflict intensified and continued through five years or more. What would they be forced to do differently? To give up? To endure?

## Activity I: War and Children

- Step 1:
- Go to the United Nations report, "Impact of Armed Conflict on Children" (<http://www.unicef.org/graca/>). Read Graca Machel's "Personal Note" aloud to the class.
- Step 2:  
Divide the report's final six sections ("Healing Minds" through "Women & Girls") so that each student is reading one or two sections. (**NOTE:** The section "Wars Against Children" is an introduction that highlights the proceeding sections. You may choose to read this aloud as a class in order to better prepare students for their reading. Return the Ten Recommendations later.) They should complete a [Reading Response Handout](#) for each section they read.
- Step 3:  
Discuss the following Reading Response questions as a class. Write student responses on the board or on an overhead as you talk.
  - What conditions of war are highlighted in this section?
  - Give a statistic that shows that this is a problem.
  - What part of the reading particularly surprised you?
  - What makes children especially susceptible to this wartime distress?
  - What are the solutions currently under discussion?
- Step 4:  
Look at the Ten Recommendations. Ask students to consider the pros and cons of implementing these. What stands in the way of the recommendations' success? Why haven't these things been done sooner? In lieu of a class discussion, you might assign the students to consider the Ten Recommendations in a short essay or a journal exercise.

## Activity II: A Specific Conflict

- Step 1:

- Have students use Internet and print sources to identify as many current/ongoing conflicts or wars as they can. They should use an atlas to locate the conflicts on a map. This could be a good homework assignment. Step 2:  
As a class, create a "master list" of current wars that the students find. If you know of any conflicts that are not included, add those as well. Pinpoint the locations on a class map.  
Step 3:  
Break students into small groups, each of which should choose a different war from the list to research. Be certain to ask students to consider why they're interested in researching a given war: they've never heard of it? they know someone from that country? they feel they should know more about that part of the world?  
Step 4:  
Assign the groups to research various aspects of their chosen war:
  - When did it start?
  - Why did it start? What is the point(s) of contention?
  - What groups are involved in the fighting? (e.g. national armies, rebels?)
  - What kinds of weapons are primarily used?
  - In what ways are teenagers and children engaged in/affected by the war?
  - What are other countries doing both to support the war (e.g., funding, sending troops) or resolve the conflict?
- Step 5:  
Have each group present the results of the assigned research by preparing an 8 x 11 sheet to copy and share with classmates that answers the above questions.  
Step 6:  
As a class, discuss the connections between the wars under discussion and the issues raised in the "Impact of Armed Conflict on Children" (from board or butcher paper). Especially focus on the affects to children.

### **Extending the Lesson:**

- Have groups debate and propose solutions to the conflict/war they researched. Present these to the class and discuss similarities and differences in their plans.
- Use the video "Soldiers of Peace" about the civil war in Colombia and its accompanying website ([www.turnerlearning.com/cnn/soldiers](http://www.turnerlearning.com/cnn/soldiers)) to provide real examples of how teenagers have made a difference in creating alternatives to war.
- Look at the projects on the War Child web site and come up with an idea for a class action project that will benefit children of a current war zone:  
[www.warchild.org/projects/projects.html](http://www.warchild.org/projects/projects.html).