



# LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE PROJECT

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## Case Study

### SAWA / Education for Peace

### Uniting Lebanon's Children and Youth During War

*This case study is one of a series of case studies developed as part of the Local Capacities for Peace Project, directed by the Collaborative for Development Action (CDA), in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.*

*The Project seeks to identify the ways in which international humanitarian and/or development assistance given in conflict settings may be provided so that, rather than exacerbating and worsening the conflict, it helps local people to disengage and to establish alternative systems for dealing with the problems which underlie the conflict.*

*For more information on the Local Capacities for Peace Project, see [www.cdainc.com](http://www.cdainc.com)*

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## Introduction

Fifteen years of fighting in Lebanon hit Greater Beirut with a vengeance in March of 1989, and was to become even worse into 1990. Intense artillery and rocket fire ravaged some of the most heavily populated areas of the city. Over 60% of Lebanon's schools were closed in March 1989 due to the fighting, and were to remain so for many months. Children and their parents were forced to take refuge from the bombardment in underground shelters for days and weeks at a time.

With the exception of a four month temporary relocation to Amman, Jordan in 1976, Unicef had maintained an active and high-profile presence in Lebanon throughout the war. Through its emergency relief activities, immunization campaigns, and essential drugs programme, Unicef had become an experienced, trusted, and well-known organization able to react quickly and effectively in a crisis, and even to extend its programs into all regions in spite of Lebanon's fragmentation along territorial lines. In 1989, traditional educational assistance was rendered impossible due to the fighting, and Unicef staff were increasingly frustrated by the appalling conditions facing children and their own inability to do something for them in the shelters.

The humanitarian challenge facing Unicef was to find a way to reach children in spite of the fighting, and to give them a chance to learn and play wherever they were. How to help make up for the lack of schooling? How to help equip them for dealing with some of their day-to-day hardships? How to help them fill the long, tedious hours in the bomb shelters? How to unite them when forces beyond their control were driving them further and further apart? In a shelter, literally in the midst of the shelling, a brainstorming session was held and the idea emerged for a children's magazine called SAWA -- the Arabic word for together.

The staff of Unicef Lebanon recognized that although SAWA would play a vital role in its own right, that role was primarily a palliative measure and a tool of social mobilization at a time when circumstances were crying out for ideas that could contribute to a longer term cure. What else could they do to prevent children from growing into the same behaviors that had sustained the war for so long? The Education for Peace project began to take shape. Using a non-formal approach to education dubbed "active learning", the goal was to mobilize the children and youth of Lebanon as agents of change for building peace, while simultaneously giving young people the chance to realize their full potential. In 1989, Unicef organized camps away from the shelling for over twenty-nine thousand children from all regions and religions. Over 1000 young volunteer animators, drawn from 35 Lebanese NGOs and community groups, were provided with the training needed to run the camps. Many more groups and thousands of children and youth were mobilized in subsequent years.

## The War in Lebanon

Fighting in an already unstable Lebanon began in earnest in April 1975, and persisted in varying degrees of intensity until late 1990. In its totality the war defies rational analysis: as it progressed, the dynamics behind the fighting and the effects of protracted violence and lawlessness grew

increasingly complex, cyclical, and generalized. What is clear enough in retrospect is that with each year of war, Lebanese society became weaker. This worsening condition fed and was itself sustained by the fragmentation of the country, creating fertile conditions for outside involvement in the war and resulting, finally, in the ascendance of dozens of armed militia whose growing grip on communities and neighborhoods effectively undermined the power of legitimate government and the Lebanese state.

The war cannot be safely characterized as a Christian/Muslim conflict. Each militia and its parent faction claimed to represent the interests of a particular group: the Palestinian, Maronite, Druze, Shi'ia, Sunni, and other communities were all under the supposed protection of various armed factions. Other groups claiming ideological orientations also emerged. Ba'athist, Nasserite, pan-Arabist, communist, quasi-fascist, and socialist factions formed militia of their own. In some instances militia activities were a precursor to the "ethnic" wars now being waged against civilian populations in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, with minority groups being targeted for destruction or purged from neighborhoods and villages. But overall the fifteen years of violence had a more generalized and perhaps random quality to it which may ultimately have contributed to an awareness of its futility, and eventually its rejection. Hostilities between factions claiming to represent the same groups accounted for much of Lebanon's violence, effectively undermining the very communities whose interests they claimed to represent.

Many of the militia had strong economic interests in contributing to the fragmentation of the country and maintaining thuggish control over their respective segments of the population. Narcotics production and trafficking became big business during the war. By 1980, Lebanon had become one of the primary sources and transit points for opium and refined heroin, and perhaps the world's largest supplier of hashish. Thousands of Lebanese came to be dependent on the drug trade for subsistence. In 1983 it was estimated that the livelihood of over 10,000 inhabitants of the Bekaa Valley depended directly on the hashish trade alone. Profits from the drug trade were used to finance weapons purchases and pay the salaries of private armies. Drug use was also a growing problem during the war, particularly among young people and combatants in the militia.

The larger militia maintained television and radio stations to propagate their version of events and stir up chauvinistic sentiments. Some established social-welfare organizations in attempts to win legitimacy. In addition, many of the militia imposed arbitrary systems of taxation in their zones of influence. Pitched battles were fought over control of port facilities and the import tariffs these could provide. Lebanon came to be divided and further subdivided into militia fiefdoms, with a confusing and ever-changing myriad of roadblocks and checkpoints serving as the bastions for combatants. Early in the war Beirut itself was bisected by the "Green Line", a swath of utter destruction and frequent confrontation that divided East Beirut from West.

Outside involvement in the war took many forms. Lebanon had absorbed hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees since 1948, many of whom lived in squalid conditions in refugee camps dotting the country. Real destabilization resulted from the propensity of surrounding states and international players to provide backing for local elites and militia in Lebanon, a behavior with a long history dating back to the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Syria, which had already played an active role in the militarization of the PLO, intervened militarily in Lebanon in 1976, subjecting

parts of Beirut to heavy bombardment in 1978 and clashing with Lebanese militia. Following their own agendas, Libya and Iran also sponsored factions in Lebanon, and large quantities of weapons were shipped from Iraq to favored militia.

The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) launched an invasion of South Lebanon in 1978, prompting the deployment of troops of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Lebanese militia sympathetic to Israel established the South Lebanon Army, creating for Israel a self-declared security zone along its northern border. After clashing with Palestinian fighters and subjecting Beirut to aerial bombing in 1981, Israel invaded Lebanon again in 1982 with the intention of driving Palestinian fighters and Syrian forces from Lebanon. Under Operation Peace in Galilee, parts of Beirut were bombed again, then held under siege by the Israeli Defense Forces who were also clashing with Syrian forces in the air and on the ground outside the city. An Israeli attempt to prop up a Christian-led regime under Bashir Gemayel met with Gemayel's assassination in September 1982, sparking a slaughter by the Phalange militia in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps of Beirut. Approximately 3000 Palestinian civilians of the over 300,000 seeking refuge in Lebanon were killed. In Israel, news of the massacre prompted massive numbers of Israelis to demonstrate against the actions of their government in Lebanon, and led to an official inquiry in which it was determined that Israeli military staff and officers on the ground knew of the impending carnage, and could have prevented it.

A multi-national force including British, French, American, and Italian troops was committed to Beirut to oversee the withdrawal of Palestinian fighters from Beirut port. Factional warfare continued, with intense fighting in and around Beirut often centered on the refugee camps. The MNF was itself targeted. After shelling the hills above Beirut with sixteen-inch naval guns, American forces withdrew from Lebanon with all other nations of the MNF following suit shortly thereafter. Syrian troops attempted a short-lived occupation of West Beirut in 1986 and instigated the "War of the Camps", with renewed attacks on Palestinian areas leading to more shelling from rival factions.

By 1987 the war had exacted a toll of over 120,000 lives, with another 10,000 being killed after being kidnapped, and 150,000 injured. Nearly all were civilians. As inter-factional fighting continued in predominantly Muslim West Beirut between the Amal and Hizbollah militia, East Beirut was also held hostage to intense fighting between and among rival Christian-led factions and Syrian forces. A particularly brutal artillery free-for-all indiscriminately targeted residential areas in Beirut and its environs in early March 1989, continuing first until the end of May and later from June to September. On March 28 some 8,000 artillery shells were fired in Lebanon. From 4,000 to 5,000 shells typically landed during the night in and around East Beirut.

Fighting continued into 1990 as militia leader Michel Aoun, who claimed the Lebanese Presidency in opposition to the government of Elias Hrawi, made a last ditch effort to hold out against the growing mix of factions and forces that were rallying against him. The apparently legitimate Lebanese Army, backed by Syrian forces, eventually compelled Aoun to acquiesce in October 1990 after more heavy shelling and intense street-fighting. Following a period of reprisals and settling-of-scores by various militia in late 1990 and early 1991, relative calm prevailed. Meanwhile, political efforts were pursued with renewed vigor

through 1989 and 1990. These culminated in the National Reconciliation Charter, (commonly known as the Taif Accord), adopted by fifty-eight of sixty-two Lebanese members of parliament as a starting point for political reconciliation. The Charter contained provisions for a Syrian withdrawal, the disbanding of all militia, and measures to ensure the resettlement of Lebanese who had been displaced during the war.

Five years later, after the loss of more than 150,000 lives, Lebanon has a tentative hold on peace. A state of relative calm has persisted since 1991 with the exception of South Lebanon, where attacks and reprisals frequently occur between the Hizbollah militia and the IDF/South Lebanon Army. Rival Palestinian factions continue to clash in areas south of Beirut, and Syria maintains a large and visible military presence in Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and North Lebanon.

### The Effect on Children

A 1988 study conducted by Dr. Mona Maksoud, Director of psycho-social research at the Children and War project of Columbia University, examined the extent and forms of impact of the war on Lebanese children. The study found that 90.3% of the sample of children had been exposed to shelling or combat; 68.4% had been displaced from their homes; 54.5% had experienced extreme poverty; 50.3% had witnessed violent acts such as intimidation, injury, or death of someone close; 26% had lost someone close to them, and 21.3% had been separated from their families.\_

A further study by Dr. Maksoud looked at the war-related experiences of Lebanese children and their psycho-social outcomes. 2.7% of the sample of 224 children between the ages of 10 and 16 years reported having actively participated in the fighting.\_ (Overall participation of the population in the fighting is usually estimated at somewhere between 3% and 5%.)

Anna Mansour, Education Programme Officer for Unicef in Lebanon during the war, felt that psychological trauma was one aspect of a much larger set of problems. She was concerned about the "hidden values" acquired by children as a result of protracted violence:

Misconception, fear, despair, conflict, mistrust, denial, and antagonism were all attitudes learned during the long 15 years of the multi-faceted civil war in Lebanon. Human rights were often violated and conflict-resolution insistently and repeatedly took violent forms to a degree that it leads the innocent growing child to believe that it is the only available solution: a situation which represents a real threat to the development of children. The hidden values that children have acquired during the war have impaired their natural development and caused great damage to their psycho-social makeup. The challenge, then, is not to repair what the war has destroyed, but to reform what the war has distorted. The challenge is to develop a new approach, a continuous workshop for positive learning where human power is redirected towards the love of peace, debate of issues, acceptance of differences, respect for freedom and realization of interdependence.\_

All the Birds Have Gone  
Bilal Amhaz, 12, Baalbek

The war makes me sad because everything has been destroyed. My elder brother is dead and I find my mother crying every time I come home from school. I hate the war because it makes my mother cry so much. Sometimes I dream that I wear my best clothes and visit all the villages and cities. At my school in Baalbek they told me how beautiful all those places are. But I am not allowed to go because that is too dangerous. It strikes me that all the birds have gone from Lebanon. They could not stand the noise of the war any longer. The war has destroyed all the beauty of Lebanon. Even the Spring is sad here. There is no electricity so we sit by candlelight. No one sings anymore. All we hear is the booming of guns. Often I cannot even get to school because of all the shooting. In the evening when we are together at home, all we talk about is the war. I was born in the war and war is all around me. Grown-up people are so stupid. When I ask why they fight they do not answer me. I wish they would throw all their weapons in the sea and that we could all sing songs together. That would be much nicer. I would like to see the people in the streets smiling. We need peace so badly.

You Never Know How Long It Will Last  
Marie Kourieh, 11, Beirut

Our country is on fire. I could cry. I am in the fifth grade of the free school and I have never known anything but war. War, always war. They are always talking about peace but I don't

know what that is. They say peace is nice. Lately we often have to take shelter under our house from the bombs. You never know how long it will last. Children and mothers cry, men shout and everyone is hungry. There is no light and no bed in which to sleep. Once our little oil lamp went out for lack of oxygen and I fainted...

Sometimes I Cry

Adel Assad, 12, Ashrafieh

We Lebanese have been living among sandbags for more than fifteen years now. War is inhuman... In 1983 my uncle was kidnapped and murdered and three months later my father was hit by shrapnel. He died immediately. I miss him so much. My school is only four kilometers from the so-called Green Line, the demarcation line between east and west Beirut. We hear the explosions of bombs and the rattling of gunfire all the time and it makes us nervous. It is very difficult to concentrate on my studies. When the fighting gets fierce, schools are closed. For several years I had to spend my holidays in the shelter. Deep down I have really lost faith in adults. When there is no firing there is always the risk of being robbed, molested, or kidnapped and there is always the chance of being murdered. Perhaps people in Western countries who read this will think: that boy has been watching too many thrillers on TV, but things really happen here that you might not have thought possible... When I come home and see my mother listening to the radio I know what that means. It means war again in our neighborhood. ...Sometimes I cry.  
Unicef in Lebanon

Unicef has maintained an active and high profile presence in Lebanon since 1948, when in cooperation with the ICRC it assisted Palestinian mothers and children who were seeking refuge from the first Arab-Israeli war. It was Unicef's first field office in a developing country.\_

Beirut was chosen as the site for a regional office in 1950. In addition to cooperative programming with UNRWA on behalf of the refugees, Unicef embarked on longer-term activities throughout the country including the promotion of public health approaches, preventive health care policies, vaccination, and maternal and child health. Other activities included rehabilitation for handicapped children, malaria control measures, establishment of the first governmental school of nursing / midwifery, and a school for sanitation technicians. Linkages were formed between Unicef and the medical schools of the American University of Beirut (AUB) and Universite St. Joseph. The Unicef Lebanon office also became involved in providing training for social workers and assisted the Lebanese government, through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, to establish a school of social work. Education programming dealt with the establishment of kindergartens in the country and training for primary school teachers.

The onset of war in April 1975 meant that Unicef had to orient itself more towards the provision of emergency relief assistance, including distribution of blankets, mattresses, clothing, soap, medical supplies, seed and fertilizer, food, and cooking utensils. Oral Rehydration Salts, vaccines, and other essential drugs were also distributed through a network of dispensaries throughout the country. The war produced especially vulnerable groups of displaced persons, orphaned children, and school-age children who could not be accommodated due to their schools being destroyed or assigned to other purposes. Unicef estimates that between April 1975 and September 1976 it provided emergency assistance to over one million Lebanese, representing more than a quarter of

the country's population. In June of 1976 a special unit was set up within Unicef Lebanon to coordinate relief work, with operations temporarily based in Amman Jordan upon the evacuation of all UN agencies. Four months later Unicef returned to Beirut as a country office.

Reconstruction work in cooperation with the government ministries of Hydraulic and Electrical Resources, Education, Health and Social Affairs commenced in early 1977, and was focused on the rehabilitation of public schools, social centers, hospitals, dispensaries, and other health facilities. A total of 1,100 schools, kindergartens, social centers, and other institutions had received assistance under this operation towards the end of 1979.

Unicef was also the lead agency, in cooperation with the government, for the rehabilitation of water and sanitation works which had been badly damaged by the war thus far. In 1980, the government put US\$ 25 million at the disposal of Unicef for reconstruction efforts in the heavily damaged south. These commenced in 1981 and included the completion of 218 water projects, 229 education projects, 46 health projects, and 30 community self-help projects. In 1982, the reconstruction and rehabilitation scheme was extended north to the Beirut - Damascus highway, encompassing Beirut, the Shuf, and Western Bekaa with 317 projects being completed in the midst of appalling security conditions resulting from continued factional warfare and the Israeli invasion of that year.

Over the next eight years, Unicef assumed an increasingly prominent role in terms of both relief assistance and regular programming. Through these activities Unicef gradually built up a logistics capacity and country-wide reach which was unparalleled: no other agency enjoyed Unicef's freedom of access to all areas of the country, and only Unicef could elicit cooperation from all factions in going about its work. Three activities in particular added substantially to the agency's country-wide recognition, credibility with the public, and freedom to act. In addition, agency staff gained important experience in social mobilization from these activities.

Operation Water Jug. In June of 1982 as Israeli forces were closing in on Beirut, the UN Secretary General ordered the evacuation of all UN agencies. Unicef stayed on however, with one international officer remaining behind with the Lebanese staff. In response to the destruction being wrought by the invasion, relief activities had to be stepped up considerably.

The IDF had imposed a 70 day siege on West Beirut, with indiscriminate shelling and aerial bombardment killing 19,000 persons and critically wounding over 30,000. A total blockade was imposed on the area which included the shutting off of water and electricity supplies. The shelling also destroyed much of the remaining water delivery system for West Beirut and the southern suburbs.

At the height of summer, the risk of serious outbreaks of typhoid and cholera was high as the people of beleaguered West Beirut resorted to unsafe sources of drinking water. Unicef's response was Operation Water Jug, and the memory of that response has served the agency well in subsequent years. A small fleet of tanker trucks marked with the Unicef logo was mobilized. A network of temporary reservoirs was set up in West Beirut and replenished on a regular basis by the fleet. Generators and pumps were mounted on trucks and driven to hospitals and tall

apartment buildings to fill tanks on the roofs from underground reservoirs. Water was also provided for fire-fighting.

Country-wide Immunization. Many of the factions and militia had made attempts to establish their own systems of social welfare in efforts to gain legitimacy among the civilian populations in the areas they controlled. These services extended, in some cases, to the operation of clinics and dispensaries formerly run by the now largely paralyzed Ministry of Health. It was against this backdrop that Unicef Lebanon was able to make a successful appeal for a nation-wide immunization campaign in 1987. Building on a successful application of this idea in El Salvador in 1985, and in the midst of continued factional warfare, Unicef was able to halt the fighting long enough to stage four "National Days of Immunization". The logic behind the initiative was that war was not the only plight afflicting children: vaccine-preventable diseases were also taking a toll. Taking this rationale to the factions and combatants, Unicef was able to secure their promise to cease-fire on the designated days to allow parents to bring their children in safety to over 700 health clinics and dispensaries throughout the country. Over 300 Lebanese NGOs, the bulk of which were aligned with confessional groups or factions, were brought into the process.

In support of this effort an aggressive public awareness campaign was pursued through the media. 32 FM and 3 television channels broadcast public service announcements from Unicef, urging parents to bring their youngsters to designated sites for vaccination on the scheduled days. Posters were printed and distributed in advance of the event. The assistance of community leadership was also enlisted by Unicef: Islamic mullahs and Maronite priests urged participation in the mosques and churches. Amal Dibo, who was a project officer with the campaign at the time, remembers faction leaders bending over backwards to help out, easing Unicef's passage through dangerous areas and the labyrinth of militia roadblocks and checkpoints. Factions rallied to the cause by providing transport, equipment, food, and fuel to the immunization teams. Originally planned as a three-day campaign, attendance at the designated sites was so encouraging that a fourth day was agreed upon between all factions and Unicef. The success of the campaign is an illustration of how involving antagonists in pursuing a superordinate goal (in this case a humanitarian one) can unite them to the extent where they stop fighting, if only for a few days.\_

Essential Drugs Program. By 1989, Lebanon's Ministry of Health was crippled by its inability to gain access to most of the country. Prior to the war, a qada or district-based network of clinics and dispensaries had served the needs of the population, but many of these had now fallen under the control of the factions, or had been destroyed. As a consequence, there was no coherent system of distribution for essential drugs. Many of the surviving clinics were marginal operations at best, and some were being forced to close since they were unable to supply basic medicines to patients. Capitalizing on its abilities for delivering country-wide assistance, Unicef embarked on a program to rejuvenate the network of dispensaries by ensuring a regular supply of forty-four mother-and-child-related essential drugs. These were obtained through Unicef's international supply system, and were clearly emblazoned with the Unicef logo. There were an estimated 75,000 beneficiaries per month from the program, including many who had found themselves particularly vulnerable to the effects of the ongoing war. In partnership with a number of local NGOs, Unicef helped to sustain a network of around 750 dispensaries and clinics. Project officers noted that the Essential Drugs Program served as a strong linking force between Unicef, NGOs,

and the regions of the country.

## SAWA

No one is spared in Lebanon these days. During the last cycle of intensive fighting, in one day in mid-March, more than 20,000 rockets and shells... ..were indiscriminately fired across the confrontation lines of Beirut. For weeks shell-shocked and panic-stricken families cowered in basements and makeshift shelters. They wait for brief lulls to rush out for a breath of air and supplies. Lebanon is, without exaggeration, in a state of asphyxiation. More than ever before, the massive destruction of infrastructural facilities has generated acute shortages in fuel, water, power, and communication networks. Access to food supplies and other vital daily needs has become much too contingent, hazardous and prohibitive in price. Chilling episodes of unrescued victims and other casualties unable to reach emergency wards in time are legion. For a country whose educational, research and intellectual institutions and cultural products were once the envy of the region, schooling is being critically undermined by incessant interruptions. All formal instruction and scholastic programmes have been halted during the past three months. No resumption is imminent. \_

The bombardment of Beirut which commenced in early March 1989 homogenized the city's inhabitants through the common experience of trying to find shelter and respite from the fighting.

Andre Roberfroid, Unicef Representative in Lebanon at the time, remembers the despair and frustration he and his staff were feeling at their inability to do more for children during the shelling. "There were bombardments every night: our nights were spent in the basement, our days were spent trying to do something." Unicef was carrying on a successful program in other areas: vaccination, essential drugs, and so on. But in these programs, Unicef was dealing with the parents of children. What could they do to reach out to the children themselves in the darkness of the shelters? How could they do something for them now? During a bout of shelling, these were the kinds of questions being posed by Roberfroid and his wife (an active Unicef volunteer), Anna Mansour, Amal Dibo, and other staff during an impromptu meeting in the Unicef basement.

The concern was that children were secluded from life outside the shelters or the confines of their immediate neighborhoods. They were being kept out of school due to the fighting, and their education was at a standstill. They had nothing to do in the shelters except listen to the fighting and news of the war, nothing to keep their minds busy except being frightened. The people at Unicef, many of whom had children of their own at home, wanted to address these children personally and have direct contact with them. They knew that parents were often succumbing to the terrible stresses of the war, and were preoccupied with meeting basic survival needs. Unicef wanted to give children a gift, something to do. But what kind of gift? Books, pencils and paper were sometimes in short supply, but why not give them an exercise book? It could include stories, arts and crafts exercises, arithmetic, and so on.

They set to work, and within a day or two had produced a mimeographed newsletter in Arabic for children, a few simple pages stapled together. (Roberfroid recalls that they "openly pirated" from French children's magazines for material. Later, Roberfroid would write to these magazines to explain how their material had been used. Replies came back saying, "God Bless you!")

The question of delivery arose: how to get the newsletter to children. Unicef had regular contact with its network of dispensaries and was able to maintain an efficient logistics capacity in spite of the fighting. Public service announcements were rushed to the local radio stations with the message, "Kids, tell your parents to go to the dispensary when it's safe: Unicef has something fun for you and your friends there." Three such newsletters were produced and distributed free in the following weeks, and the response was overwhelming. The newsletters disappeared from the dispensaries as quickly as they could be delivered. The decision was quickly made to formalize the project.

Amal Dibo, a project officer with experience in communications, education, and social mobilization, had recently completed an assignment and was chosen to head the team to produce a magazine for Lebanon's children. The task: the free, non-commercial magazine was to be Unicef's link between itself and Lebanon's children, giving children a chance to learn and play wherever they were and aid in preparing the new generation for life in a society at peace. Funding was initially made available for 50,000 copies (later increased to 70,000 at a cost of US\$11,000 / issue), with a 30 page issue being produced roughly every six weeks.

Amal was able to solicit a donation of layout, typesetting, and illustration services from a large Beirut printing and graphics firm which, after tender, was also awarded the contract for printing. Next, drawing upon her circle of friends and acquaintances she recruited a creative team of volunteer writers and illustrators. Within 7 days of the project being formally launched and sixty days after the first meeting, the first issue of the magazine was ready to be sent to the printer. At the last minute, the team realized that they had forgotten to come up with a name for the magazine. Amal remembers that the choice of a name was an easy one. "You have to understand what we were facing during the war," says Amal six years later. "June '89 was a time when violence was concentrating on the middle part of Lebanon, the heart of the country. Lebanon was paralyzed -- checkpoints and seclusion, generalized violence. Children were confined to the shelters, and had not been able to go to school for three months. What we wanted to do was bring them together, to give them a sense that they weren't alone. So we chose SAWA, the Arabic word for Together, because the wound was so clear. We wanted to build a nation on the recognition of common, universal values." From the outset, that is the sort of thinking that consistently gave the content of SAWA a unifying character. In every issue the dominant, overarching theme was unity and friendship: it invited children to join the SAWA team in building peace at a level they could respond to, making their own and others' lives better by becoming involved, responsible, considerate, active, and aware of their impact on others.

Each issue of SAWA was further developed around a central focus, carefully chosen in the context of the war environment to take children beyond the confines of the shelters, capture their imaginations, make them think, entertain them, and impart lessons in an interactive and approachable way. Issues were devoted to relaxation, space, nature and the outdoors, the world of work, the family, and school. Later, some issues were developed more explicitly in support of Unicef's broader programming. Water, immunization, Unicef's summer Peace Camps, Yourself, and You and the Others each formed the basis for an issue.

Each issue also contained regular features. The first page was devoted to a letter addressed to the

young reader from Unicef. (see box 2) The "Know Your Country" section would take readers on an imaginary tour: to Baalbek, to The Cedars, or across the "Green Line" of Beirut. In other issues it would show a map of Lebanon and the different foods or crafts that came from each region. For the children of Lebanon, growing up during the war meant that travel outside their own damaged neighborhoods was impossible, and their environment taught them to form identities based on their religion, ethnicity, or clan background. As an alternative, "Know Your Country" sought to instill a sense of Lebanese identity. A similar feature, "From Our Culture" would relate a Lebanese proverb or folk tale, often combining a knowledge of culture with a moral message. Sometimes this section was a place to introduce a prominent person from Lebanon's past. Amal cites one issue which talked about one such man, a genius, who happened also to be Muslim. Thus SAWA was also helping to upgrade the image of "the other" in the minds of children who, in their isolation wrought by the war, may never have had occasion to get to know a real Muslim.

"Living SAWA" was the main venue for promoting a more-or-less explicit message of peace. This included stories and parables illustrating children's rights, solidarity, unity and non-violence. "Right or Wrong?" provided a chance for the child to decide on appropriate forms of behavior in different situations. Through "Do You Know?", Unicef informed children and their parents about the things Unicef was doing at the time such as immunization campaigns or the summer Peace Camps, inviting their participation.

"Your Health" was another regular feature through which Unicef's health section could promote preventive health care around hygiene, safety at play, good eating habits, exercise, and personal responsibility. A section called "Open Window On Your World" expanded the horizons of SAWA to include people of far off places and cultures. Expanding those horizons in a different direction, "Science Speaks To You" was a chance for children to learn about their bodies and their environment. Creativity was encouraged

My Little Friend:

It has been two months now since the schools have been closed, and the adults are away from you, busy with many things and big problems. You don't understand what is happening around you, and you are scared and confused, impatiently waiting for peace to return so you can start playing with your friends again, go back to your toys and your books. You wait and you are bored!

That is why Unicef has rushed to come to you to spend some fun and useful time. We present you with some games and drawings, with information, ideas, and stories, some of it for 5 to 7 year old kids, some of it for those aged 7 to 9, and some for those of you who are older than 9.

You can join in with your neighbors and brothers and sisters and parents to make use of these pages. You can join in with all the kids who read these pages so we can be Sawa wherever you are and no matter how difficult the situation is.

This is just a beginning for us to tell every child that you are not alone, and we are all Sawa in these difficult times...

But Sawa will not get better if you don't join us, you and all the other readers and their friends, and the adults who write and draw and create things for you to make your world better despite the circumstances. We hope that we will stay Sawa and grow Sawa so that kids in Lebanon grow and stay happy.

Andre Roberfroid

A letter from Unicef, 1st Issue of SAWA, June 1989

through "Arts and Crafts" where, for example, the child would be shown how to make a dozen different toys from something as simple and available as an empty plastic water bottle discarded in the street or shelter.

SAWA's pedagogical approach was interactive, not pedantic: it sought to involve children on their own terms by seeing the world through their eyes. Amal Dibo: "We knew that the most effective education is taken pleurably, so we wanted SAWA to be not just didactic, but a pleasure for the child." The creative team behind SAWA asked, "What is the reality of the daily lives of children?", and "How do we take them beyond those boundaries?" Each colorfully bound issue invited kids to play: word games, puzzles, jokes and riddles, coloring and drawing exercises, and a feature on magic tricks all provided hours of entertainment, thoughtfully designed to send an unthreatening message while helping to fill the gap left by the closure of schools. Stories were written for SAWA which presented a problem or a perspective-taking exercise, ending in an invitation to readers to finish it for themselves, or challenging them to think about the consequences of the story. (see "Laila and the Wolf", box 3) Some of the content of SAWA was meant for different ages: five to seven, seven to nine, and nine and up, with older children being asked to pass on the simpler pages to their younger sisters and brothers. Sharing was actively encouraged: readers were asked to use SAWA with their brothers, sisters, friends, and parents,

thereby expanding SAWA's coverage and unifying influence.

With each issue, SAWA's content came to be increasingly determined by children themselves. Following the distribution of the first issue, Unicef received 1500 letters from children thanking the agency for its gift and enclosing stories, drawings, poems, and jokes. From the second issue onwards, SAWA devoted two pages to "Have Your Say", a sort of return-mail letter. (see boxes 4,5) Here, the child was invited to respond to SAWA by returning the pages containing his or her own contribution -- of a picture, a story, or anything else -- to Unicef. Printed instructions on the pages told the child to take the letter back to the place where SAWA was received, and from there it would be forwarded to Unicef. The effect was like opening a floodgate: the idea caught on quickly and soon Unicef was receiving an average of 2,500 replies from each issue. These were carefully read and sorted, then stored in binders in Amal's office. Selected responses were published in a new "Return Mail" section of SAWA which often included suggestions from readers on what they would like to see next.

### Laila and the Wolf!

A storyteller was about to tell a group of kids the famous story of Laila and the Wolf. But the wolf appeared and protested that first, the kids should hear his side of the story. "I'm not mean like you make me out to be! You have to hear my side of the story before you judge me!", he said. The storyteller agreed, and they listened:

The day Laila came to the woods to see her grandmother, I was taking care of the forests and cleaning it up as usual. Then I heard strange sounds, so I hid behind a tree. It was a little girl making all that noise, and instead of protecting the beauty and calm of nature she started picking flowers, singing loudly and stepping on the grass with no care for the animals and other living things around her.

I was upset with her behavior, so I went up to her and asked what her name was. While dancing and singing she told me her name was Laila, and that she was going to visit her grandmother who lived by the river. I decided to teach her a lesson so that she would not repeat the same mistakes again, invading and upsetting the forest like she was doing this time.

I ran towards her grandmother's house and told Grannie how Laila was behaving. She agreed with me, and we decided to make a plan. I put on Grannie's clothes and lay down in her bed. I asked Grannie not to show up until I called her.

Laila soon came into the house and started making fun of my teeth. I told her they were sharp so that I could eat her better! She ran off frightened, but I never meant to hurt her, just to scare her so that she wouldn't repeat her mistake. I followed after her trying to explain, but she wouldn't

listen and ran to and fro. Then a woodsman came into the hut, and I was in big trouble. He had a big ax, so I jumped through the window and ran away.

Until now, Grannie hasn't told anybody that I just meant to teach Laila a lesson about being more careful in the forest. Everybody believed Laila's story and never once wondered if I was really as mean as all that. The truth is that I'm like everyone else. I have good things and bad things, but they never see the good in me. Do you agree with them?

"Laila and the Wolf", SAWA No. 17, Dec. 1993

The contributions became an integral part of SAWA, and it was from this source of feedback that SAWA began to take on a more overtly peace-oriented and activist role. Through SAWA, children spontaneously began to give expression to their yearning for a better life. Poems, pictures, stories and prayers from the children talked about peace and possibilities, not about war and violence. Although the war was always there in the background, Amal notes that of some 45,000 responses received, she remembers very few that actually spoke of the war and its

hardships. In January 1990, SAWA invited readers to take "The Cleanliness Pledge" (see box 6). Thousands of signed pledges were returned to SAWA and some of the names published in subsequent issues. A response came in from one little Beirut girl suggesting a "Pledge for Peace". Accordingly, the pledge appeared in SAWA and kids enthusiastically signed on.

In early 1990 the potential of SAWA was clearer, and Amal Dibo was requested to rethink the project in order to make it a real support for Unicef programming. Consultations and brainstorming sessions were held with staff within Unicef, and a small survey was undertaken to assess its coverage and how children responded to the magazine. As a result, SAWA's role was consecrated as Unicef's porte-parole to children as well as the child's link to Unicef. SAWA would explicitly support Unicef programming in the health, Education for Peace, and Rights of the Child spheres. It would provide a link between children, bringing them together through the pages of the magazine to share the same views, values, stories, and games. SAWA would thus be a "token of unity". Committees were established from within Unicef to oversee SAWA's programme content, writing, editing, drawing, proofreading, and distribution, with input from programming and field staff. The budget for 8 issues of SAWA - one year's worth - was set at US\$130,000 before inflation.

The survey revealed some problems in distribution, which troubled the SAWA team. "For the idea of integration to take hold, distribution has to be universal," said Amal in 1990. Problems were remedied by using dispensaries as drop-off points for bundles of 50 to 150 copies. From there, Unicef Field Officers worked to mobilize NGO partners and other institutions: Scouts and other youth groups, women's organizations, and sports clubs were given the job of spreading SAWA around. Children's groups, creches, playgrounds, churches mosques, shelters and other public areas were all canvassed. 10,000 copies were sent for distribution in the Palestinian camps. Responses from children would be picked up and taken back to the dispensaries and from there to the SAWA team at Unicef headquarters in Beirut. Many Unicef field staff eagerly embraced their new role in the

### From All Villages We Came

From all villages we came  
From all over Lebanon we came  
We came here happy  
Joy is calling us  
This land has been seeded with war,  
It can only love.  
This is the whole story and more,  
Please God protect us.  
It has been so many years  
We are missing each other  
But they became crazy,

And only we have stayed.  
This happiness is calling us  
And says, "Where are you kids?"  
We answer, "HERE", and say  
We are coming to build.

A Song From the Summer Camps, 4th Issue of SAWA, Nov. 1989

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We Believe that Peace Comes From Children

I promise my country and my friends to work for  
and maintain the cleanliness of my country.  
I promise that:

I will only throw garbage in the places where it belongs,

I will contribute to cleaning the places that need it  
- the street, home, and school,

I will tell my friends and family about my pledge and well get them  
to participate in my mission.

If you want to build peace, this is a first small step you can take, but this step  
will become bigger if we do it SAWA. Write to us if you willing to take the pledge.

The Cleanliness Pledge, 5th Issue of SAWA, Jan. 1990

promotion of SAWA, since it enhanced their relationship with NGOs. Thus SAWA became an instrument of social mobilization which in turn became instrumental in the distribution of SAWA itself and, ultimately, the dissemination of messages from the health and education programmes. Eventually, animators of the Education for Peace project would also assist in distribution. The demand for SAWA continued to be further bolstered by PSA's on radio.

SAWA continued to appear regularly until the end of the war late in 1990. Five issues were produced in 1989, six in 1990, two in 1991, three in 1992, two in 1993, and the last one in December 1994. One area where a little more care might have been exercised was in the suspension of SAWA's regular production. No announcement was made, which left some children wondering where it was. Amal Dibo had been sent to Baghdad by early 1991 to help

Unicef cope with the conditions facing children in Iraq following the war in the Gulf. Seeing the potential for SAWA there, she was able to produce 3 issues of an Iraqi version of the magazine.

As the needs of Lebanon's children have changed, so has the SAWA project. As Unicef emerged from an extended emergency mode of operations in 1991/92, funding for existing projects had to be re-evaluated from the ground up. Responsibility for SAWA was turned over to the Education programme, where the magazine is used as a training aid in extra-curricular support of a new initiative called the "Learning for Life" programme. Under this programme, SAWA remains a Unicef publication but is produced by a team of Global Education specialists under the auspices of the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) of the Ministry of Education. Where the original intent of SAWA was to provide comfort, reassurance, and entertainment for children secluded in bomb shelters while promoting a sense of togetherness, the CERD team is working to develop a global education curriculum which would see lifeskills, environmental awareness, gender-sensitive issues, and similar themes made an integral part of a re-worked national curriculum. Recent and upcoming issues of SAWA reflect these new goals, and serve as an instructional tool. Now that schools have been re-opened and the roadblocks torn down, periodic issues of SAWA can be distributed most efficiently from there.

#### Education for Peace

In addition to its role in social mobilization in support of other programming goals, SAWA provided Unicef with a link to children during the war, and a means of expression for the children themselves through which they could have vicarious contact with one another in spite of their physical isolation. In March 1989 the staff at Unicef were painfully aware of how deep that isolation was. Andre Roberfroid recalls now that, "Sometimes kids were living across the street from one-another, but had never met." Roberfroid and Anna Mansour, Programme Officer for Education at the time, were asking themselves what Unicef could do to help prevent children from doing the same things that their parents had done, resulting in fifteen years of war. Roadblocks and checkpoints were just the physical manifestations of more profound barriers between people. Their perception of others was biased by propaganda and fear. How could these barriers be dismantled? If not dismantled, how could they help young people detour around them? Anna Mansour felt that the answer was giving children a chance to be together to practice new attitudes and behaviors, convincing them that their differences were a privilege.

"We had to give kids a chance to meet one-another", says Roberfroid. The question was how to arrange it. Anna knew that before the war, there used to be a summer camp movement in Lebanon supported by a group of NGOs and civic associations. What if that could be rejuvenated? Unicef could contact NGOs and let them know that the agency would be willing to support a summer camps program on the condition that kids from different confessions and regions of the country would be mixed. Anna quickly set out to explore the idea, informing 50 established NGOs -- most with a confessional affiliation but predating the war -- that Unicef would provide funding, logistics, and training for camp animators if the NGOs were willing to provide participants. Unicef would also guarantee the passage of children to get them across the checkpoints in safety. In return, the NGOs would agree to the following objectives:

1. The camps would bring together youth of different regions, religions, and social status;
2. The camps would give youth and children a better chance to know one-another and to know their country through discovery and sharing;
3. Youth and children would experience 'living together' positively, sharing human, social and relational values through creative and recreational activities.

Hence Unicef was explicit from the outset about its peacebuilding agenda, and by the end of May 1989 the response from the NGOs was overwhelmingly positive. Moreover, the NGOs represented a cross-section of Lebanese society. Early July was targeted for the first camp, situated in the Bekaa Valley away from the shelling. Work commenced on designing a training session for camp monitors aged 16 to 25. By the end of May a week-long session had been designed and the process of training got underway. The first two-week camp was held as scheduled, with 150 kids aged 5 to 12 in attendance from all over Lebanon. The logistics and security concerns involved in getting children together were formidable. Project staff were initially surprised that Christian parents were willing to send their children into Muslim areas for the camps. But the name of Unicef reassured parents, and in the interest of transparency a radio and television campaign carried announcements of the event to all Lebanon. Still, sometimes difficulties did arise in selling the idea to parents. "Some of the Palestinian kids had grandfathers who were born in the (refugee) camps," says Roberfroid, "so it was difficult to talk to them about peace and tolerance. They would ask, 'What about justice?'. We would respond by asking them to give their children a chance to try a different approach." As for getting the children from point A to point B, Roberfroid never accepted negotiation as a means of securing passage for the children from one militia stronghold to the next en-route to the camps. Instead of asking for their permission, he met with each faction leader to inform them of Unicef's plans to move busloads of children through the barricades under the flag of Unicef. The strategy worked: no problems emerged.

As 1989 progressed, Unicef built on the enthusiasm generated by its initial efforts and, in response to the demands of children and their parents -- who welcomed the opportunity to get their kids away from the fighting -- the agency staged more gatherings. NGOs themselves organized day-camps, with management of the curriculum, media, and other support coming from Unicef. Education for Peace began to emerge as a programme in its own right, expanding rapidly.

During the month of July, 1050 future trainers were trained in social animation techniques such as play, song, games, and dance. In workshops, peace concepts and language were discussed, and they learned about Unicef's strategy for "active learning" and the needs of children. But the largest part of the training was learning how to put peace values, concepts, and culture to work, developing their leadership skills, and orienting their behavior towards positive and open attitudes.

Unicef observed that for the younger children in the camps, it usually took a couple of days for them to be comfortable with "the other". For many of them it would be the first time they had ever met a Christian or a Muslim or a Druze. Many had never spoken with someone from Beirut, or from the Shuf. Suddenly they were being brought together to live, work, play, and eat at one-

another's elbow, but the environment was carefully planned to provide a safe, unthreatening atmosphere. There was a period of "mutual observation" Roberfroid recalls, "then sort of an explosion of will to live together, as if they had been thirsty for it."

The experience was carefully planned to provide an atmosphere of tenderness and caring, forgiveness and solidarity. A typical day at the camps would see youngsters working together on a common task such as cleaning their "homes" or planting trees. Awareness of and respect for the environment was promoted as a means of opening children's eyes to their surroundings. Games -- specially designed to encourage cooperation, sharing, and knowledge of "the other" -- would be initiated by encouraging and supportive animators, who made a point of nurturing contact between children of different backgrounds. There would be time for arts and crafts, singsongs (see box 8), skits and dances, trips to historic sites, and hikes in the woods. The children were provided with T-shirts and caps adorned with the Education for Peace logo and the caption, "Together We Build Peace".

Project staff were not surprised to see children coming together so easily. But they were surprised with the animators: Roberfroid observes that, "Many of the monitors had borne the brunt of the war. Many had served as militiamen. But they were so happy and excited - they had discovered something." During their training as youth animators in Education for Peace, the change that came over those who had fought in the war was remarkable. "The more they had been extremist during the war, the more involved they became in the program. These were the most energetic young people in Lebanon."

Testimonials from animators tell the same story:

I ask myself every day: is this really Lebanon? Is it really this easy to put the lie to all the slogans and the arguments against reconciliation between the Christians and the Muslims?\_

I believed that the idea of living together was an illusion. I have seen now how it's a reality. I've lived it. I feel that I've changed every morning.\_

We Want to Live Together

How are we going to grow?

We will grow together.

And how will our country prosper?

We will prosper together.

In the shelters, in the plazas,

In the homes, on the streets,

We will not give up.  
We want to live together.

I do not know all Lebanon.  
We will get to know it together.  
But how will I move around?  
We will wander around together.  
By service, by bus,  
Traffic and cars,  
We will not give up,  
We want to live together.

I want to visit Baalbek.  
We will go there together.  
I want to spend summer in The Cedars,  
We will go up there together.  
Let us decide, let us think,  
Let us plan and not be late.  
We will not give up,  
We want to live together.

He seeds, you harvest,  
And we eat together.  
You get tired and I am patient,  
We continue together.  
It doesn't matter who wins,  
We will build peace together.  
We will not give up,  
We want to live together.

A Song From the Summer Camps, 4th Issue of SAWA, Nov. 1989

The animators proved to be the backbone of the project, and came to be seen by Unicef as the major agents of change for peace. Aged roughly from 16 to 25, these young people came from all over Lebanon to learn to interact positively with children and act as constructive role models. Through Unicef's training program, they were provided with the tools and ideas needed for practical action in their communities, implemented by themselves on their return home in order to reach out to children. But it was the young people that provided the energy: Leading the way, dedicated to the cause of peace and childhood in Lebanon, the youth response went beyond expectation. Fully aware of their role and responsibilities, not only were they saying

no to war and yes to peace, but suggesting and demanding to be given more opportunities to serve the children and contribute within their community to the reconstruction of a peaceful society. These young animators know very well how they want their Lebanon to be and represent an untapped reservoir of energy, will, and skills. They constitute the real potential for social mobilization in the future.

As the programme matured, the scope of activities was considerably broadened to help the animators reach out into their own communities. Working through their respective NGOs, they were able to interact with far more children than it was possible to bring to the camps. One of the more active NGOs in the programme was Nached, the youth organization of the Muslim al Makassed founded in 1875. Makassed is a humanitarian and social movement which in 1990 operated 74 schools, a hospital, and its own radio station. Through Nached, Makassed had provided 125 animators and instructors to the EFP project by late 1990. Some of those who were trained in 1989 are still active in Nached, and are continuing the work that was started six years ago.

Training for trainers continued to expand the reach of the program. On a visit to Lebanon in late 1990, I was invited by Anna Mansour to participate in a weekend training seminar for trainers, held in Bsherry near the birthplace of Kahlil Gibran. About 30 trainers had congregated here from across Lebanon to further develop their skills. They were an eclectic group, and Unicef staff were skilled at keeping the energy level at a constant peak. Workshops on the latest theories from peace research followed training sessions in puppet theater. They would learn the latest songs from the Education for Peace programme while at table for their lunch, then launch into an exploration of the challenge of encouraging cooperative behavior. Breaks gave them a chance to explore the mountains of Gibran the poet, or get some fresh air at The Cedars a few kilometers away. For most of them it was the first time they had been to North Lebanon, and many spoke of the magic it held for them. Most of all, they worked incredibly hard and had fun in the process: they were motivated, cooperative, confident, and intellectually involved.

Training sessions like this one drew on a pool of expertise that had been recruited by the programme. Animators would receive instruction on child needs from a professor of psychology and social activist; they would learn about human rights from the director of a human rights NGO; teachers would show them how to critically assess children's literature, and so on, all geared explicitly to the goals of the EFP agenda. In total, animators received 80 hours of comprehensive training over four weekends. (See Annex for training curriculum).

The accomplishments of the EFP project are impressive. In 1989, as the war continued throughout most of the country, 29,000 Lebanese children attended 34 summer peace camps and 79 day camps. One celebration in September brought together 700 animators and 9000 youngsters for a day-long "Peace Festival" in the Western Bekaa. In 1990, 30,000 youngsters attended a total of 155 day camps and 60 summer camps, as well as a number of camps organized by NGOs themselves with support from the project. By September 1991, Unicef had reached 100,000 children and had mobilized 240 NGOs as partners in the programme representing the entire spectrum of confessional, ethnic, and regional groups.

Following the end of the war the programme continued to evolve. Efforts have been made to pass on more of the responsibility for Education for Peace to the Ministry of Education and the

NGOs. A new "Learning for Life" programme is being developed, retaining much of the Education for Peace curriculum while expanding further into environmental, gender, and other themes as well. Unicef is also cooperating with CERD of the Ministry of Education and other partners in CERD's development of a Global Education curriculum.

### Analysis

Both SAWA and the Education for Peace initiative are inseparable from the context that produced them. With Unicef as a capable facilitator, each project was able to give expression to a powerful -- but previously dormant -- will to peace among Lebanon's young amidst the violence of war. In addition, Unicef was astute in judging that Lebanon was ready for these interventions, no small task in the convoluted factional politics of division and violence. Appraised against their own stated objectives, both projects were a resounding success.

As is the case with all such "bottom-up" approaches, it is more difficult to assess whether and how the results have manifested themselves in any lasting social or political way. To date, neither project has been subjected to an in-depth evaluation or impact assessment, although Unicef is currently in the process of thinking through the requirements for an evaluation of the EFP experience. Given the scope of EFP programming and the large number of participants it mobilized, it should be possible to produce an accurate picture of what the impact has been by going to the participants themselves, since Unicef still has their names on file. A sample of three or four thousand animators - now in their twenties and thirties - could reveal if and how the experience has changed them some years after their training. Similar questions could be asked of a sample of ten to fifteen thousand younger participants who attended the camps or were otherwise involved in the programme. Of those who are no longer involved in EFP-related activities, can any patterns be discerned? How many young people were kept out of the militias or the Lebanese diaspora as a result of having the option of becoming involved in something constructive during and after the war? To what extent was the experience therapeutic? These are the kinds of questions that can and ought to be asked six years after the fact.

Such an appraisal would be invaluable for a number of reasons, not the least of which relates to the difficulty in selling the value of such programming to donors facing scarce resources and hard choices in a world with no shortage of pressing needs. The experiences nurtured by SAWA and EFP are individual and subjective, to a large extent, (and after all, they were designed to be), which doesn't necessarily render them any less important in terms of their potential contribution to the achievement of peace. But how to present results in concrete terms that are able to withstand the scrutiny of cynics? That is the challenge for those who have a visceral conviction that "this really works...", if peacebuilding measures in general are to be taken more seriously in the future.

In the case of SAWA, it is hard to imagine that a pre-test could have been conducted with prospective readers in the Beirut of 1989. In general however, it would be a useful exercise to keep in mind the long-term exigencies of evaluation requirements when entering into emergency-oriented interventions.

In any event, Unicef Lebanon was a successful facilitator of a country-wide social mobilization for

peace during war, which is perhaps its greatest achievement. The agency made a conscious decision to take a peacebuilding initiative, when it could easily have stayed the course in its relief activities and regular programming.

In interviews, the national staff of Unicef Lebanon were openly nostalgic about some important aspects of the organizational culture which prevailed in Unicef during the inception of SAWA and the EFP project. Operating in the context of a sustained emergency allowed leaders to emerge, innovations to be welcomed, good and creative ideas to be acted upon and implemented relatively quickly.

In 1989 there was a core group of highly motivated, caring, experienced, and capable people in the Unicef office. The Unicef Representative in Lebanon in the late 1980's, Andre Roberfroid, is a Belgian national and was the only international staff member in Lebanon at the time. Five years after his departure from Lebanon, both Roberfroid and his wife, who pitched in to Unicef on a voluntary basis, are remembered fondly by national staff as having an acute appreciation of Lebanese culture and the problems facing the country. In the chaos of Beirut in the late 1980's, Andre recognized the importance of maintaining an active presence and showing the flag when conditions were at their most grim. He also led by example: his former driver recalls Andre donning flak jacket and helmet in order to make the perilous drive through shellfire to the office in West Beirut, never missing a day of work or closing the office. "We were all driven by adrenaline back then," he remembers. "In Lebanon I wasn't a technician or a bureaucrat. We often acted out of emotion." Anna Mansour remembers that many staff were similarly dedicated, sometimes preferring to spend nights in the bomb shelter in the office basement rather than risk being prevented by the fighting from coming in to work from their homes.

Amal Dibo and Anna Mansour are both tremendously driven individuals with many years of experience. Their personal investment of time, energy, and commitment undoubtedly was an important factor in explaining the success of the projects. Such energy is infectious: Anna and Amal had enthusiastic and dedicated teams of like-minded individuals to work with. "The key," says Roberfroid, "is to build confidence by giving over your decision-making resources to good people. Outside intervention has to be very minimal and discreet. We are seen as manipulators, no matter how good a job we do. Above all it's a question of finding the energies and the people. Nothing can be built unless it's based on the strengths of the people in the country involved."

Looking back, Amal Dibo recalls the strong sense of mission that drove the SAWA team. They put "heart" into SAWA and were rewarded by the thousands of responses received from Lebanon's kids. They could see the effect their work was having. The ability of SAWA to engage the imaginations of its readers was all the justification they needed to continue. Nasreen, an illustrator on the SAWA team, also remembers the spirit of teamwork and creativity which prevailed in the formation of each issue. She and other contributors served with the SAWA project for eight months as volunteers before being placed on the payroll. Relative to other Lebanese who were often restricted to the confines of their neighborhood, employees of Unicef were extraordinarily privileged in a way, since their affiliation with the agency allowed them to travel without hindrance to different areas of the country. Roberfroid suggests that this gave them a sense -- held by few others -- that they were "Lebanese-first", and this elicited in his staff a special sense of responsibility.

Unicef also enjoyed a mandate that was relatively easy to sell politically: an appeal on behalf of children opens many doors. This advantage was not squandered. Unicef in Lebanon had earned a reputation for experience, for maintaining a presence, and for being effective and balanced. Other agencies during the war often provided aid on the basis of certain proportions of their assistance going to various factions. Unicef, on the other hand, would provide assistance on the basis of the capacity of a group to deliver. The prevailing philosophy was: "As much as you do, I can help. If you do nothing, I can do nothing."

Unicef Lebanon was in an emergency mode during the latter stages of the war, which gave it more autonomy as a country office. Due to constant damage to telephone lines, communications were difficult with Unicef Headquarters in New York and the regional office in Amman. Although they were isolated much of the time, this combination of factors gave the agency a higher than normal degree of flexibility, and encouraged it to use its initiative. Both projects initially attracted much attention from Unicef HQ, but although their reaction may have been a bit skeptical at first, and the innovations in Lebanon regarded as somewhat idealistic, HQ was supportive throughout and deserves credit. At the same time, funding was relatively plentiful since Lebanon was receiving widespread media coverage in the West. As Roberfroid observes, "If the country you're in is on the front page, you don't have to worry about funding."

There are indications that SAWA and Education for Peace had spin-off effects. Bilal Farraje, an EFP animator from Nached trained in 1989, related to me a story about taking home a copy of SAWA to his little sister Dalia. It was an issue of SAWA containing pictures of children playing together in the peace camps, and letters from youngsters talking about their experiences there. She asked Bilal about the pictures, and he explained to her that many of the kids in the pictures were Christian. After looking a little quizzically at the pictures again, Dalia insistently informed her big brother that, "I want to go there!" Bilal also remembers that often, worried parents would show up at the camps to check on their children. Parents would see their children working, playing, and living with children from other groups, and would sometimes be a bit concerned until their own children "forced" them into their circle of new friends.

There needs to be a certain readiness among a population in order for efforts towards social mobilization to strike a chord. Bilal recalls that conditions were so bad in Beirut in 1989 that parents would drop their chauvinistic sentiments when given the chance to get their children out of the city. Their concerns about getting their children out were more powerful than their concerns about "the other". More importantly, he thinks that by 1989 "...the Lebanese had discovered that the war was a sick joke - stupid!" In addition, both SAWA and the Education for Peace programme were non-threatening, or were just not taken overly seriously by adults. According to Amal Dibo, the pivotal moment for many Lebanese was the closure of schools in 1989. "Education has a very important place in Lebanese culture. It's highly valued. If they had no money to send their kids to school, parents would sell their homes to pay for it." When the fighting imposed an indefinite interruption in their children's schooling, that was the final straw for many. Many others associated with the projects echo the "enough is enough" theory, saying that after 15 years of war the younger generation was ripe for the picking. Certainly -- for the militia as well as for Unicef -- many of them were.

The role, disposition and strategies of Unicef as a facilitator of social mobilization for peace bear a closer look. The immediate outcomes of Unicef's efforts were the provision of a safe, unthreatening, and rewarding space for young people to get involved; an impetus to act; guidance and direction in a complex environment, and; resources that would otherwise have been inaccessible. These outcomes were achieved in a number of ways:

**Use of Compelling and Appropriate Symbols** One of SAWA's illustrators came up with an evocative logo representing all that SAWA and the EFP project sought to achieve: a smiling little girl and boy working together to reconstruct a dove, with the caption, "Together We Build Peace". (see box 7) This symbol was silk-screened onto thousands of T-shirts for distribution to monitors and young participants of the peace camps, and was featured in television spots promoting the gatherings. Buttons, baseball caps, posters, and pins were also adorned with the logo, which was mimicked by many of the children who sent drawings in to SAWA.

Another tool was song: project staff composed lyrics and music promoting togetherness, hope, and a sense of the possible. (see box 8) These songs were published in SAWA, taught to children in the camps, and used as background music in radio and TV spots.

Unicef's own logo was used widely in both projects. The widespread recognition it elicited lent credibility to the efforts, while helping to reassure anxious parents about the safety of activities involving their children.

Even the word Sawa itself took on a new meaning in the lexicon according to Unicef. Used often in the magazine, and as a dominant theme of EFP, together or togetherness was not just an abstract notion. Sawa was a tenet to be lived by and, with some help from Unicef programming, experienced.

The use of national symbols also figured prominently in both projects. In a different context such as a "war of secession" or "ethnic conflict", inherently political symbols such as flags or map outlines could easily be taken as crass insults and provocations. But in Lebanon these were symbols of a constructive nationalism -- unity, solidarity, and fraternity -- as opposed to fragmentation, isolation, hostility. The Lebanese flag was unabashedly displayed both in SAWA and at the peace camps, its green cedar representing the Cedars of Mt. Lebanon, a focal point in Lebanese cultural identity.

Both projects also sought to offer a meaningful experience of these symbols and what they stood for. The "Know Your Country" feature of SAWA was an introduction to these. At some of the peace camps, cedar saplings were planted and groomed by the participants; the location for training seminars for animators were held in culturally evocative locations like Bsherry, the birthplace in North Lebanon of social critic and poet Kahlil Gibran; visits were arranged to Baalbek and other ancient sites to inculcate an awareness that Lebanon was a country with a rich history of civilization, and was worth saving.

**Media** Unicef Lebanon was an effective communicator, and had developed an excellent relationship of cooperation with Lebanese media in support of its programming during the war. In advance of the country-wide immunization campaign of 1987, Unicef spots telling parents of the importance of vaccination, and urging them to bring their kids to the local dispensary on the "National Days of Immunization", were broadcast extensively to all regions of the country. Radio proved to be a particularly effective tool for dissemination since virtually all households had a radio. For their day-to-day safety, people tuned in to hear news of the fighting and learn where the current danger areas were. Spots were also developed in support of SAWA and the EFP project, and in these Unicef was explicit in its promotion of peace and the notion that children are entitled to it.

According to Aida Jamal, Unicef Lebanon's External Relations Officer, the agency's high standing with the public meant that media outlets were eager to air Unicef's public service announcements during the war, and would often work with her to produce professional spots. Unicef nurtured the relationship further by, in one instance, bringing in an outside consultant to train local media in the production of PSA's. For SAWA, Unicef was able to keep costs down by soliciting the donation of design and layout services, as well as some illustration, from a prominent Beirut graphics and printing firm.

**Outreach** A country-wide mobilization of youth and children in Lebanon could not have been envisioned without the active involvement of Lebanese NGOs, professional associations, and other groups. Beginning with personal contacts and working outwards, project staff engendered a spirit of collegiality and cooperation with a diverse collection of partners. Again, Unicef Lebanon had gained considerable experience in this area from other areas of its programming, and had been astute in its development of partnerships throughout the country.

For SAWA, outreach could be achieved in spite of the fighting via distribution of the magazine through Unicef's network of dispensaries, and through schools and NGOs. For the EFP project, trainers were eventually recruited from over 240 NGOs (in 1990) from all regions and confessional groups in the country. These included Scouts groups, human rights organizations, philanthropic societies, professional associations, and so on. Organizations such as Nacet, the youth wing of the large Islamic foundation al Makassed, and the Christian Movement Sociale actively collaborated with the project, providing many animators and sponsoring many activities on their own initiative with support from the EFP programme.

Outreach was made even more of a reality by nurturing inclusiveness in project development and implementation, the logic being that, "To mix the kids we had to mix the partners: so we deliberately mixed the partners." Curriculum development and training sessions for animators typically drew upon a broad spectrum of expertise from a wide variety of sources including academia, social activists, specialists in child development and social animation, all of whom came from different confessional, ethnic, and social backgrounds.

**Leadership and the Spirit of Voluntarism** Leadership and voluntarism -- going above and beyond that which was required -- was an important facet of Unicef's work which was displayed at all levels from the top-down. Through their dedication, project staff led by example giving little

thought to devoting their evenings or weekends to their work. The theme was also a fundamental aspect of project content. The SAWA boy (and later, the SAWA girl) which led young readers through different experiences in each issue was a positive role-model who acted with optimism on his own initiative, thinking problems through while being responsive to the needs and feelings of others. In the EFP project, highly motivated volunteer animators and monitors were provided with leadership training and skills in social animation. An important part of the training for trainers process was making them aware of their role as models for behavior when dealing with younger children. Further, they were encouraged to use their initiative to apply what they had learned to activities in and among the NGOs they were recruited from.

**Sustainability** This was mainly a function of the energy that Unicef tapped into through enlisting the participation of youth. In addition, steps were taken -- through the provision of training and resources -- to ensure that NGOs could plan and implement EFP activities on their own initiative. As the EFP programme progressed, more NGOs and eventually the Ministry of Education shared in the responsibilities, thus broadening the program's foundation.

#### Observations, Questions, Lessons Learned

1. Unicef Lebanon has demonstrated that safe, country-wide social mobilization for peace can be a viable option in an active war environment. Such a strategy is an option worthy of consideration by large, capable humanitarian agencies or NGO consortiums in other conflict settings, especially when other institutions and actors are incapable -- for a host of possible reasons -- of addressing the root causes of violence.
2. The Education for Peace project was successful in bringing young people together around an explicit peacebuilding agenda in spite of the difficult circumstances prevailing in Lebanon during the war. This suggests that peacebuilding activities of and for children and young people may be met with more tolerant attitudes - or may be seen as less provocative and potentially threatening - than those involving the population at large. Put a little differently, both SAWA and the EFP project are examples of successful disaggregation, one component of which was a broad base of support within the "disaggregated" segment of society being mobilized. In a kind of inclusive disaggregation, Muslims were brought together with Christians, southerners with northerners, city dwellers with those from tiny villages, liberals with traditionalists, and so on: by design, they were all young people.

Tolerance for peacebuilding activities involving the young may emerge out of a genuine wish to give them a chance to do things differently, or because children constitute a "zone of peace" in their own right, or simply because the activities of young people are not taken altogether seriously by adults. Whatever the reason, such activities may open doors for expanded peacebuilding activities or have "spin-off" effects, and thus may be seen as an effective means of initiating a larger peacebuilding process, (i.e., child to child, child to youth, youth to youth, youth to adult, adult to adult).

An organization's mandate -- such as Unicef's -- may situate it favorably for mobilizing a particular constituency. Putting children and youth first in programming in a war environment is

justified on the grounds that the young constitute a most vulnerable group. At the same time, it may open windows of opportunity for acting through young people by mobilizing them as agents of change.

What about other constituencies? Young former militiamen were found to be particularly effective and enthusiastic volunteer animators in the Education for Peace project, just as many returned veterans of the war in Vietnam were able to make a particularly poignant case as activists against the continuation of that war. Involving former combatants in peacebuilding activities might be an excellent way of contributing to the difficult process of their demobilization, helping to facilitate their re-entry into civil society. There are other examples. In the Republic of Georgia, a women's group (which originally emerged out of concern for their soldier-sons and husbands) is trying to mobilize women from around the world to press for a yearly, world-wide, day-long cease-fire. Physicians, lawyers, nurses, teachers, parliamentarians, clerics and other professionals have formed global groups to work for peace through their own constituencies. How can groups such as these be further enabled through relief and development programme design?

3. SAWA and the responses it elicited brought children of different backgrounds together through the pages of a magazine, at a time when they were physically isolated by war. In addition, there is evidence that SAWA whetted children's curiosity about kids from other groups in an unthreatening manner, sparking in some cases a desire to attend the Peace Camps to learn more. These observations provoke two questions. First, if it is not possible or advisable to bring parties together physically, how can a vicarious interaction be encouraged? Second, how can a vicarious form of interaction help to lay the groundwork for a more involved interaction later on?

4. Bearing in mind that Unicef went out of its way to ensure that there was a representative mix in the NGOs it dealt with, the inclusiveness and balance achieved in the outputs of the SAWA and Education for Peace projects -- in spite of the fact that project staff were disproportionately Christian -- attest in these cases to the relatively greater importance of outlook over confessional or ethnic background. Among the possible factors that may have led to this in these cases were: a relatively high level of education among project staff; the special sense of responsibility and of being Lebanese-first that accrued from being able to travel throughout the country as Unicef employees; the homogeneity rendered by the experience of protracted war, and; the presence of a compelling superordinate goal, rendering assistance to children in need of help. The inclusive manner in which Unicef went about facilitation also diminished the importance of having a carefully balanced religious and ethnic mix among staff.

5. Unicef Lebanon was a facilitator of social mobilization for peace, utilizing the following strategies:

- using compelling and appropriate symbols
- cooperating with local media
- outreach to expand impact and promote inclusiveness
- identifying and harnessing the talents of motivated leaders
- taking measures to capitalize on momentum and ensure sustainability

Unicef's role as facilitator meant providing the following:

an impetus to act  
guidance and direction in a complex environment  
resources that would otherwise have been inaccessible  
a safe, rewarding, non-threatening space for young people to get involved

6. Unicef's experience in Lebanon suggests that it chose the right strategy at the right time. For the Unicef staff, there were important signifiers in the situation of Lebanon in 1989 that led them to believe that their ideas stood a sound chance of success. The readiness of a population to accept efforts towards social mobilization for peace is a product of many factors. In general terms these could include a mix of: the reputation of the agency "underwriting" or initiating activities; the depth of inter-communal divisions; the degree of receptivity or skepticism towards novel approaches; issues of "war-weariness" including the credibility of fighting and fighters, the degree of individualization of violence and its effects, the presence or absence of alternatives to violence, the history of past efforts to undermine violence; the existence or non-existence of bridges and communication between communities; the compatibility of mobilization efforts with other needs, (i.e., the desire to remove children to a safe area, and others such as the needs for food, water, shelter, comfort, respite, equilibrium, self esteem, self-expression, belonging, information, security, etc.); the sense of individual efficacy taught by culture and environment, etc..

7. Linkages can be forged between the provision of assistance in response to commonly-experienced needs on one hand, and on the other hand providing beneficiaries with the opportunity to give expression to their own desires to find alternatives to violence. This was demonstrated by the linkage a.) between SAWA's stated goal of providing an educational tool for children unable to attend school, and the theme of togetherness which dominated the magazine, and; b.) between the EFP project's stated goal of giving young people a break from war, and the promotion of inclusiveness, the inculcation of constructive values, etc..

Sometimes parents expressed concerns about allowing their children to mix with kids from other confessional or factional groups at the camps. But their common desire to get their children away from the fighting made them decide that it was "worth the risk". The shared experience of hardship in war may confer upon people a certain homogeneity which transcends other differences, uniting them in ways that can be acted upon.

8. Unicef Lebanon's capacities in logistics, freedom of movement, staff, communications, outside-agency relations, social mobilization, and goodwill all contributed to effective emergency relief and development programming. These same capacities were utilized to excellent effect in the implementation of SAWA and the Education for Peace project: no other capacities needed to be built.

9. There was a reciprocal relationship between SAWA's support of Unicef's larger programming

goals (i.e., in the health and education fields), and larger programming providing a credible medium on which to "piggyback" a peacebuilding activity or message. Programmes were complementary in other ways: Unicef took an opportunistic approach to expanding and improving its reach and effectiveness through its contact with NGO partners in the regions. Relationships forged through cooperation on health projects, for example, were harnessed in the distribution of SAWA and the recruitment of participants for the EFP project.



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\_ For an exploration of this idea, see Robin Hay, *Humanitarian Ceasefires: An Examination of Their Potential Contribution to the Resolution of Conflict* (Ottawa: Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, {Working Paper No. 28}, July 1990).

\_ Samir Khalaf, *Besieged and Silenced: The Muted Anguish of the Lebanese People* (Oxford: Lynne Rienner, 1989) 12.

\_ Quoted in: UNICEF/ Antoine Tauk, *Evaluation et documentation de l'experience vecue aux stages de formation d'instructeurs et d'animateurs: Programme de l'Education a la Paix* (Beirut, 1990) 17.

\_ Ibid.

\_ UNICEF, *UNICEF Lebanon - Annual Report 1989* (Beirut, 1989) 31.