



Consultancy Report: Small Arms, Children and Education



SEESAC

South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse
for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons



Small Arms, Children and Education

– What is the Future?



SEESAC

South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse
for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons



The **South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons** (SEESAC) has a mandate from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (SCSP) to further support all international and national stakeholders by strengthening national and regional capacity to control and reduce the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and thus contribute to enhanced stability, security and development in South Eastern and Eastern Europe.

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Executive Summary

1 Introduction

The SEESAC Small Arms Curriculum Project was funded by the EC under the auspices of the EU 2PP from March through until November 2006, with the aim of investigating the need for curricula on small arms developing materials in cooperation with stakeholders and developing a plan with Ministries of Education to implement the curricula. However more in-depth study and discussion during the education consultancy raised doubts about the current concept of 'small arms risk education' for children. This further research strongly suggests that such risk education programmes should not be introduced into schools, as they lack educational validity and are not particularly effective. The focus of the consultancy then changed to reviewing the available knowledge about:

- Child development;
- Research on risk-taking;
- Research on safety and risk education;
- The public health approach to small arms and violence; and
- The role of media violence in influencing children's attitudes to weapons.

Such reviews were deemed important as activities on education and small arms have already been undertaken but have not been based on sound educational and psychological research. The main brief of the consultancy has been to look at the issue of a national curriculum or related educational activities in schools with some mention of community-based awareness activities with children. During the period of the consultancy, contact was made with staff of Ministries of Education, UNDP SALW Control project staff, OSCE, ICRC, local NGOs, and those experienced with issues relevant to small arms and children. Attempts were also made to gather all materials used in education projects with children, both in the region and internationally, including project reports and, where available, evaluations. Extensive literature reviews have been compiled and placed under the Education section of the SEESAC website. There is now a considerable literature relevant to the issue of children, youth and small arms, the key documents of which have been included in a *Review of Key Literature on Children, Youth and Small Arms*, and also contains links to organisations working on the issue.

2 Summary of findings

Much useful data and experience has been obtained on the linkages and psychology of children, youth and weapons. It is hoped that this work will inform reasoned, evidence-based debate and discussion on the issues. Furthermore, after an extensive review of the psychological, public health and educational literature on child development, risk-taking among children and youth, injury prevention, 'gun safety' education and the role of media violence and wide-ranging consultations with relevant organisations and professionals (UNICEF, ICRC, OSCE, WHO, Ministries of Education, NGOs) the following can be concluded.

Impact data

There is a need for public health data on the impact of small arms on children, both directly (injuries and deaths) and indirectly (the impact of suicide in the family and domestic violence) and there was little evidence of a direct impact of weapons on children and youth.

The report recommends that:

- Public health data is collected as part of an integrated programme to improve data collection on the incidence and causes of all accidents and injuries among young people.
- Further research is conducted in SEE on the impact of violence in the media on children and young people, and the role that the media play in glamorising weapons and violence.



An integrated approach

Approaches to the issue of children and small arms in SEE generally lacked a children's rights approach and were not based on knowledge of child development and education. There is also a lack of awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child among some UN staff and staff of Ministries of the Interior. Moreover, addressing the issue of small arms and children from a technical perspective, based on an arms control model, or by analogy with mine action programmes, is misconceived and in fact there has been little consultation with young people about their concerns (including security concerns), combined with a tendency to assume that small arms is an issue for them, and fund projects designed by external actors.

The report recommends that:

- A public health approach is introduced to respond to the problem of small arms in the region, as there is a lack of 'actionable' data on the impact of small arms on children and youth. A public health approach would also highlight the role of small arms in domestic violence and in suicide, as well as the employment and mental health needs of veterans and their families.
- Since firearms in the home intensify the level of violence where domestic violence is already present, arms control and weapons collection programmes should continue, changes in the law should be made to make domestic violence illegal, programmes need to be implemented to raise awareness of the extent and costs of domestic violence, and there needs to be improved reporting and data collection.
- The issue of firearms should be viewed as one aspect of this larger problem, and programmes should address the root causes of such violence. Ministries of Education should continue and strengthen their commitment to the development of schools as 'zones of peace' and safe places for children, where children's rights are integral to the functioning of the schools.
- Civil society groups such as those working on behalf of women, religious communities, veterans, youth etc, should be consulted on small arms and security issues, so that safer communities, free of excess weapons, can be created together. Governments, community groups, parents and teachers also need to create opportunities for young people's voices to be heard, and then create programmes together to address their concerns.

Educational programmes

The concept of 'small arms risk education' is not an educationally valid concept with current research questioning the validity and effectiveness of 'gun safety' programmes, and advising against their use at the present time. The small arms education projects already implemented in SEE have generally been stand-alone, short-term projects, adding to the burden of schools and teachers and without demonstrated effectiveness. Emphasising small arms as an issue and funding specific programmes targeting the issue with children has the potential to do harm, in making gun owners and government authorities complacent about community safety, and removes the responsibility from the appropriate people. There have been weapons collections programmes and some awareness raising about gunfire at celebrations, but otherwise few attempts to target gun owners who must hold the responsibility for the safe use and storage of their lethal weapons. Furthermore, Ministries of Education and children's organisations do not see small arms as a priority issue in education or child protection, although they are aware of the problem of excess weapons in SEE.

The report recommends that:

- 'Small arms risk education' programmes should not be supported and encouraged. Where they are already planned, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there should be a comprehensive independent evaluation. Education and awareness programmes on small arms should focus on adults, particularly gun owners.
- Governments and gun owners are held to account for any violence involving children and small arms.
- UNICEF should take the lead role in responding to the issue of small arms and children and UNDP should consult with young people about their security concerns, and support the development of programmes responding to the needs of young people.



- The temptation to create a new issue of 'small arms and children', with specific funding, should be resisted. Existing programmes on child protection, education for peace, conflict resolution, human rights education, schools without violence, should be funded and supported so that these approaches become integral to curricula and the functioning of the school system.

Acronyms

AAP	American Academy of Pediatrics
AGSF	Americans for Gun Safety Foundation
APA	American Psychology Association
AVPI	Armed Violence Prevention Initiative (WHO and UNDP)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAP	Child Access Prevention
CSS	Centre for Security Studies (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EU 2PP	EU Second Pilot Project on SALW Control
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NRA	National Rifle Association (USA)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (DAC)
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SCSP	Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe
SEE	South Eastern Europe
SEESAC	South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of SALW
SOP	Standing Operating Procedure(s)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization

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Consultancy Report: Small Arms, Children and Education

1 Introduction

SEESAC has a mandate from UNDP and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (SCSP) for support of national and international stakeholders to strengthen national and regional capacity to control and reduce the proliferation and misuse of SALW and thus contribute to enhanced stability, security and development in the region. The UNDP SEESAC Small Arms Curriculum Project was funded by the EC in 2006, through the EU 2PP, with the aim of investigating the need for curricula on small arms, developing materials in cooperation with stakeholders, and developing a plan with Ministries of Education to implement the curricula.

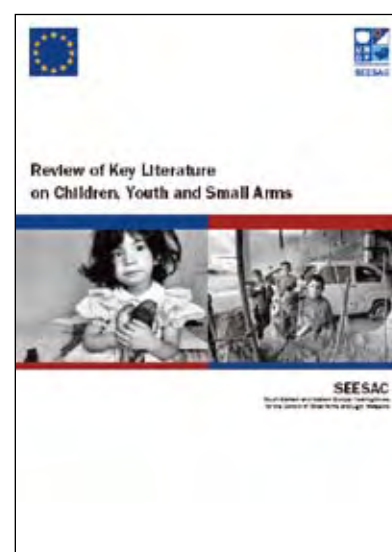
In 2005 SEESAC produced a report *SALW Awareness in Schools: Towards a National Curriculum*. This document was a preliminary review of some of the issues relevant to education and small arms, but it was written from a SALW Awareness perspective rather than an educational perspective; accordingly there was little input from educators. The report made a number of assumptions:

- Since the countries of SEE are committed under the Stability Pact to 'continued tangible progress' in SALW awareness, the inclusion of 'risk education' in schools would meet this requirement;
- Risk education could prevent tragic accidents involving small arms and children; and
- Education on the negative impact of weapons could reduce future violent and criminal behaviour among young people.¹

More in-depth study and discussion during the education consultancy raised doubts about all of these points and resulted in questioning of the current concept of 'small arms risk education' for children. This further research strongly suggests that such risk education programmes should not be introduced into schools, as they lack educational validity and are not particularly effective. The focus of the consultancy then changed to reviewing the available knowledge about child development, research on risk-taking, research on safety and risk education, the public health approach to small arms and violence, and the role of media violence in influencing children's attitudes to weapons. This was important as such reviews had not been done before in relation to the issue of small arms and the results would inform policy and programming for children and young people. Much of the activity so far on education and small arms has been well-intentioned, but not based on sound educational and psychological research.

Although mention is made of data relevant to young people aged up to 24 years, the main brief of the consultancy was to look at the issue of a national curriculum or related educational activities in schools. Some mention, however, will be made of community-based awareness activities with children. During the period of the consultancy meetings were held with staff of Ministries of Education, UNDP SALW Control Project staff, OSCE, ICRC, local NGOs, and contacts were made with those experienced with issues relevant to small arms and children. Attempts were made to gather all materials used in education projects with children, both in the region and internationally, including project reports and, where available, evaluations. Extensive literature reviews were compiled and have been placed on the SEESAC website.

There is now a considerable literature relevant to the issue of children, youth and small arms: the key documents were included in a *Review of Key Literature on Children, Youth and Small Arms*, as well as a document listing links to organisations working on the issue.



Picture 1: Front cover of Review of Key Literature publication

¹ [http://www.seesac.org/reports/SALW%20in%20Schools\[Final\].pdf](http://www.seesac.org/reports/SALW%20in%20Schools[Final].pdf) pp. 2-3, accessed 04 March 2006.



For the purpose of educators, 'small arms' are guns, pistols, rifles, and may include grenades. It is not helpful to use the term 'SALW'², as it is unnecessarily technical and gives the impression that technical knowledge is needed to discuss the issue, whereas in reality the issue for children and young people in SEE is one of injury and violence.³

As the brief of the education consultancy was to consider children in school, the definition of children follows that of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁴ namely that a child is aged from birth to 18. However, in looking at the issue of small arms, children and young people, it must be remembered that the UN has defined 'youth' as aged 15 to 24, and many health and crime statistics are reported in this way. Further, it is important to distinguish teenagers (13 - 19) and young adults, as the sociological, psychological and health problems they face may differ.⁵ There are also cultural differences in recognition of different phases of childhood and youth, and these should be borne in mind when reviewing the literature on children and small arms.

² SEESAC uses the term SALW (Small Arms and Light Weapons) which is defined as 'all lethal conventional munitions that can be carried by an individual combatant or a light vehicle, that also do not require a substantial logistic and maintenance capability' (see SEESAC's Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards and Guidelines (RMDS/G Glossary 4th Edition at [http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2002.10%20Glossary%20and%20Definitions%20\(Edition%204\).pdf](http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2002.10%20Glossary%20and%20Definitions%20(Edition%204).pdf), accessed on 04 October 2006). For the general reader, perhaps an educator or NGO staff involved in policy development on children's issues, the term SALW (Small Arms and Light Weapons) is unnecessarily technical and confusing. Light weapons are not relevant to the issues of children and youth, except in relation to armed conflict and its impact. Many sources referring to children use the term 'small arms, or 'guns', 'weapons', and 'firearms' interchangeably (Note to the IRIN/OCHA news publication, 'Guns out of Control: the continuing threat of small arms', May 2006. <http://www.irinnews.org/webspecials/small-arms/default.asp>, accessed on 04 October 2006). So for the purposes of this paper however the term 'small arms' will be used to refer to 'weapons designed for individual use. They include, inter alia, revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns' which is the definition used by the United Nations (see <http://www.un.org/events/smallarms2006/faq.html>, accessed on 04 October 2006). In the Education section of the SEESAC website, the term 'small arms' is used in preference to SALW.

³ Fortunately there is no problem of child soldiers in the region. This and other issues are covered in the support document *Review of Key Literature on Children, Youth and Small Arms*, <http://www.seesac.org>.

⁴ <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/crc.pdf> p.2, accessed 09 May 2006.

⁵ <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unvin/ganda.htm>, accessed 03 October 2006.



2 Background

2.1 UN and EU Statements and Studies

2.1.1 The Geneva Declaration (June 2006)⁶

Box 1: The Geneva Declaration

“The international community has acknowledged that armed violence and conflict impede realization of the Millennium Development Goals, and that conflict prevention and resolution, violence reduction, human rights, good governance and peace-building are key steps towards reducing poverty, promoting economic growth and improving people’s lives.”

Points Relevant to Children and Small Arms:

- Promote a comprehensive approach to armed violence reduction issues, recognizing the different situations, needs and resources of men and women, boys and girls, as reflected in the provisions of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1612; and
- Ensure that armed violence prevention and reduction initiatives target specific risk factors and groups, and are linked to programmes providing non-violent alternative livelihoods for individuals and communities.

Source: <http://www.iansa.org/issues/documents/armed-violence-and-development-geneva-declaration.pdf>, accessed on 12 September 2006.

It should go without saying that the targeting of risk groups should be based on evidence in each country, not simply the assumption that certain groups, such as boys and young men, are at risk.

2.1.2 The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe

As already noted, the Stability Pact refers to governments’ responsibility to increase awareness about the issue of small arms proliferation and control but there is no suggestion that this should involve children and young people as a separate group.

2.1.3 Convention on the Rights of the Child

Any discussion on children and small arms must be based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The relevant principles are:

- Article 3: the best interests of the child in all activities concerning them; Protection and care of the child necessary for his or her well being;
- Article 6: the child has an inherent right to life, survival and development;
- Article 19: all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures should be taken to protect the child from all forms of physical and mental violence and injury; and
- Rights to participation and consultation.⁷

Within the UN system, UNICEF is tasked with child protection, which includes all forms of violence against children.⁸ UNICEF’s Chief of Child Protection, Karin Lindgren, has proposed a concept of the ‘Protective Environment

⁶ Signed by 42 countries, only by Slovenia from SEE.

⁷ Convention on the Rights of the Child, <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/crc.pdf>, accessed 09 May 2006.

⁸ The term Child Protection, as used by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), refers to the protection of children against violence, exploitation, and abuse. It includes the situation of children in conflict with the law, and children without their customary caregivers (such as orphans, children in institutions, and those separated from families in time of conflict or disaster)—conditions that render children particularly vulnerable to violence, abuse, and exploitation. Lindgren, Karin, ‘The Protective Environment: Development Support for Child Protection’, *Human Rights Quarterly* 27 (2005) 214-248, p. 216



Framework', to ensure that governments address the underlying systems that fail to protect children. The Framework sets out eight elements that determine children's protection from violence, exploitation and abuse:

- Government Commitment and Capacity;
- Legislation and Enforcement;
- Culture and Customs;
- Open Discussion;
- Children's Life Skills, Knowledge and Participation;
- Capacity of Families and Communities;
- Essential Services; and
- Monitoring, Reporting and Oversight.

The Protective Environment Framework (see Figure 1) is a logical place within which to place issues relevant to the impact of small arms on children, through armed conflict and through violence in society. The processes of child protection are more relevant than 'quick fix' awareness and education programmes on small arms:



Figure 1: The Protective Environment

Box 2: The Protective Environment - Child Protection

"Child protection has neither a vaccine nor a universal blueprint for interventions. Country by country, situation by situation, the systematic factors that enable violence, exploitation, and abuse against children to continue unchecked - policies, practices, and the absence of systems and institutions—have to be understood and addressed. This task is circumstance specific, and highly labor intensive."

Source: Lindgren, Karin, 'The Protective Environment: Development Support for Child Protection', *Human Rights Quarterly* 27, 2005 214-248, p. 223.

One of the unexpected outcomes of this consultancy has been the realization of the low level of knowledge of many people about child development and children's rights, including UN staff. It has been disturbing to discover that some research and programmes have been conducted with children without parental consent or consent of children. Young people have not been consulted about their concerns, but rather presented with pre-prepared questionnaires and in some cases, programmes. As a result of this realisation, a section on Professional Issues Relevant to Children and Small Arms is included in the Education Section of the SEESAC website.⁹ This includes material on children's rights, participation, child development, research with children and UNICEF's Guidelines on ethical reporting on children. It is hoped that those working on small arms issues who are unfamiliar with children's rights programming will inform themselves of these issues.

⁹ Professional Issues Relevant to Children and Small Arms <http://www.seesac.org/Education>.



2.1.4 UNSG Study: Violence against Children

The UN Secretary General's *Study Report on Violence against Children* was released in October 2006.¹⁰ The full report is available as a hard copy as of 01 December 2006.

Box 3: UN Secretary General's Report on Violence Against Children

"The full range and scale of all forms of violence against children are only now becoming visible, as is the evidence of the harm it does. This book documents the outcomes and recommendations of the process of the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. 'The Study' is the first comprehensive, global study on all forms of violence against children. It builds on the model of the study on the impact of armed conflict on children, prepared by Graça Machel and presented to the General Assembly in 1996, and follows the World Health Organization's 2002 *World Report on Violence and Health*. The Study is also the first United Nations (UN) study to engage directly and consistently with children, underlining and reflecting children's status as rights holders, and their right to express views on all matters that affect them and have their views given due weight (emphasis added). The central message of the Study is that no violence against children is justifiable, and all violence against children is preventable. The Study reveals that in every region, in stark contradiction to States' human rights obligations and children's developmental needs, much violence against children remains legal, State-authorised and socially approved. The Study aims to mark a definitive global turning point: an end to the justification of violence against children ..."

UNICEF will follow up the launch of this report as part of its Medium Term Strategic Plan (2006 - 2009). One target relevant to the issue of small arms is to increase to 60% the number of programme countries with national quality standards based on 'child friendly' schools or similar models, which include learning environments free of violence.¹¹

The Deputy Director of UNICEF, Rima Saleh, highlighted the need to include the issue of violence against children in all UNICEF country programming frameworks, including the UNDAF (UN Development Assistance Framework) and PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers) and the need to:

"strengthen data around the issues of violence. Ensuring sound and routinely updated data and its effective use is important to feed into evidence-based advocacy, policy development and programming".¹²

In regard to firearms (small arms) the questionnaire sent out to governments asked if there were reports on the national profile of known and suspected deaths, and if so, whether there was any data on external causes of death, such as firearms.¹³ This data will be available in the complete Report. The Report also referred to weapons as a source of violence against children in the community and, where weapons are available, they contribute to violence amongst peers, and result in more severe injuries and death. The Report recommends the implementation of prevention strategies to reduce immediate risk factors, one of which may be possession and carrying of guns.¹⁴

2.1.5 UNICEF and Small Arms

Currently the issue of small arms is placed within the Office of Emergency Programmes of UNICEF in New York, linked with landmines. At the country office level, education or protection staff have initiated some programmes. UNICEF has also been involved in advocacy on the small arms issue, in support of the UN Programme of Action

¹⁰ At the time of writing the full report is not available, just the executive summary. The Education Consultant and other staff members of UNDP SEESAC were consulted about the small arms section of the Report.

¹¹ http://www.violencestudy.org/IMG/pdf/Rima_Salah_statement_-_follow_up.pdf, p. 2, accessed 13 November 2006. The UN Secretary General initiated the study in 2003, and three UN agencies: OHCHR, UNICEF and WHO.

¹² p. 3.

¹³ <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/study-quest-E.doc> p.8, accessed 13 November 2006.

¹⁴ <http://www.violencestudy.org/IMG/pdf/English.pdf>, p. 31, accessed 12 October 2006.



on Small Arms.¹⁵ The pamphlet 'No Guns, Please We are Children!' was developed in response to the preparation for the 2001 UN meeting on small arms.¹⁶ The pamphlet cited UNICEF's work relevant to small arms:

Box 4: UNICEF Statement on Small Arms 2006, New York

"The Programme of Action contains a third measure, of immediate relevance for children: Awareness education and the promotion of a culture of peace. UNICEF's programmes are supportive of this measure, as they possess an 'education for peace' character, whereby education seeks to promote peace and tolerance, and not fuel hatred and suspicion. An important facet of this, is our promotion of schools as 'zones of peace', which create an environment in which children can learn and develop, safe from violence and free from the presence of small arms.

Complimenting this effort, UNICEF engages with partners to undertake capacity building concerning peace and tolerance, risk education, and conflict resolution. UNICEF would like to encourage delegations to bring this issue into greater prominence at the Review Conference and in its official outcome documents. An increased commitment in this area will help facilitate confidence building, reconciliation, and help teach alternatives to the culture of the gun. Further, it will also encourage enabling initiatives such as 'schools as zones of peace', where children, the most vulnerable in our society, have an environment in which to learn, grow, and be safe from violence and the presence of small arms. In particular, the Programme of Action highlights the critical need for action-oriented research aimed at facilitating greater awareness and better understanding of the nature and scope of the problems associated with the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects. UNICEF feels that with greater support to this measure, including situation analysis and assessments, it will be possible to bring better clarity to the multi-dimensional factors related to the humanitarian impact of the proliferation and misuse of small arms. Subsequently, we will be able to establish appropriate mechanisms to systematically address the impact of small arms at the global, regional and local levels. In this regard, UNICEF and various partners are collaborating in the landmark 'UN Study on Violence against Children'. The study will provide a detailed global picture of the nature, extent and causes of violence against children and young people. It will also propose clear recommendations for action to prevent and reduce such violence. Complimenting this effort, and as called for by the UN Security Council resolution 1612, UNICEF joins with others in the development of a system to monitor and report on egregious rights violations perpetrated against children in conflict-affected areas. The improved flow and quality of information will ultimately inform and enhance protection measures for children."

Source: Preparatory Committee For the 2006 Review Conference On the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Mr. Julien Temple, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF for the Thematic Discussion on Humanitarian and other Dimensions, 13 January, 2006, New York
<http://www.un.org/events/smallarms2006/pdf/UNICEF-Cluster-I.pdf>, accessed 10 September 2006.



Picture 2: UNICEF pamphlet,
July 2001

- "Promoting schools as 'zones of peace' in which children can learn and develop, safe from violence and free from the pressure of small arms and light weapons.
- Teaching children constructive self-expression and non-violent conflict-resolution skills through peace education programmes...
- Linking landmine awareness to a campaign in Albania that highlights the threat of small arms and light weapons to children under the banner, 'Don't Let Guns Kill Our Dreams'.
- Conducting pilot projects in Kosovo, Liberia, Somalia and Tajikistan to counter the use of small arms and light weapons among children and to build a culture of peace.
- Supporting Activities in Croatia that reduce children's access to weapons in their homes."

One of UNICEF's main responses to the issue of small arms and children has been to take the lead on the issue of child soldiers; clearly small arms are just a part of that complex issue. Fortunately the issue of child soldiers does not arise in SEE.

¹⁵ Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN Document A/CONF.192/15) <http://disarmament.un.org/cab/poa.html>, accessed 13 November 2006.

¹⁶ [http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/No_Guns_Please_-_We_Are_Children\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/No_Guns_Please_-_We_Are_Children(1).pdf), accessed 12 May 2006.



UNICEF also works with youth:

“UNICEF’s overall adolescent agenda focuses on initiatives to empower adolescents to fulfil their potential and participate in their societies. UNICEF has adopted a human rights-based approach to programming for adolescents that identifies the protective factors for reducing risk-taking behaviours of adolescents and finds new ways to harness their resilience, strength and positive energy in programming efforts. This approach is a deliberate shift from traditional programming, which focused only on the problems of adolescents”.¹⁷

Within UNICEF the issue of small arms and children is currently placed in the Office of Emergency Programmes and is linked with landmines. The Consultant met with UNICEF staff in New York to discuss the findings of this Education Project. The main focus of the Landmine and Small Arms team has been on landmines, but there is increasing interest from donors in small arms. The main activity on small arms has been in support of the Programme of Action, that is advocacy; but also support to pilot projects in four countries, support to programmes in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and support to initiatives in the Caribbean building a culture of non-violence and supporting resiliency among children. Current thinking is to place the issue within the framework of violence and children, which is one of the top five priorities for UNICEF, and draws in UNICEF’s wealth of experience on child protection.¹⁸

To conclude, the issue of small arms proliferation and possession is one aspect of violence against children, and needs to be viewed in this broader context, rather than framed as a ‘new’ or ‘special’ issue.

¹⁷ Youth and Violent Conflict: Society and Development in Crisis? United Nations Development Programme, 2006, p. 61. http://www.undp.org/bcpr/whats_new/UNDP_Youth_PN.pdf, accessed 15 May 2006.

¹⁸ Meetings with Paula Claycomb and Julie Myers, UNICEF, ‘Landmines and Small Arms’, New York, 09 November 2006.



3 Impact of Small Arms on Children and Young People

Box 5: Adolescent Risk and Vulnerability

“Adolescents today face complex and changing environments in which many things can go right and wrong. If we are to serve and protect them, we must have a full appreciation of these environments as well as society’s opportunities to shape them. Research that can conceptualise, measure, and evaluate the total burden of adolescent vulnerability is sorely needed.”

Source: Baruch Fischhoff, Elena O. Nightingale, Joah G. Iannotta, Editors, ‘Adolescent Risk and Vulnerability’, 2001 <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/10209.html>, accessed 11 July 2006.

It is important to state that the number of weapons (legal and illegal) does not automatically translate into a risk to children and young people because the reasons why people own guns is not static or homogeneous, and depends on a range of variables:

- Socio-economic;
- Political;
- Cultural;
- Historical; and
- Geographical.

The international data currently available suggests that small arms have a range of impacts on children and young people:

- Death and injury;
- Human rights abuses;
- Displacement;
- Psychological trauma;
- Insecurity;
- Culture of violence; and
- Loss of opportunities.¹⁹

WHO and UNICEF have been giving increasing attention to injury prevention for children and young people. While more attention has been focussed on small arms, there is no separate data on their role as a factor in childhood injuries. Data on childhood injuries is available for 2002:

¹⁹ *Putting Children First: Building a Framework for International Action to Address the Impact of Small Arms on Children*, Biting the Bullet series, Rachel Stohl with Sarah Aird, Laura Barnitz, Jimmie Briggs, Rebecca Catalla, Boia Efraime Junior, Antoinette Errante, Heang Path, Stephanie Powell, Frank Smyth and Christina Torsein, <http://www.smallarmsnet.org/issues/themes/children/childrenfirst05.pdf>, pp.7-11, accessed 28 November 2006.

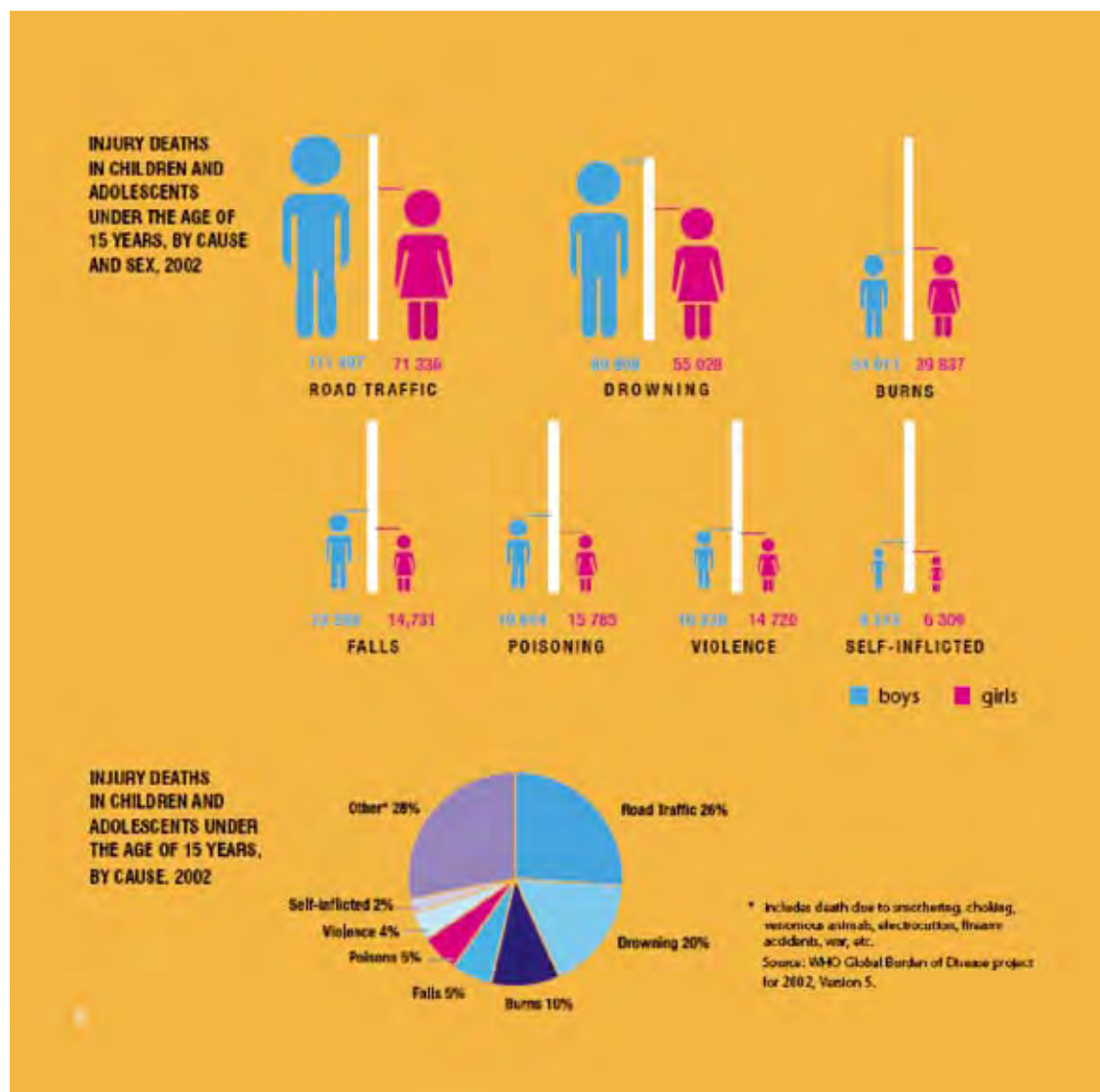


Figure 2: Injury Deaths in Children and Adolescents 0-15 by Cause, 2002 (Source: Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention: A Global Call to Action, WHO/UNICEF)

It is noteworthy that firearms are not included as a separate cause of injury deaths, but are subsumed under the category of 'Other'. This may reflect the fact that firearms are not a significant cause of injury and death to children compared to other factors.

Box 6: Guns and Children in the USA

The United States has a particular problem with guns and children, and US attitudes to guns have an impact on global policy: "Handgun injury is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in American society, particularly among young people. Large numbers of children are affected by handgun violence through the loss of fathers, brothers, and other relatives. Young children are injured, and occasionally killed, in handgun 'accidents'. Some young children and many adolescents are murdered with handguns. Like infant mortality, handgun violence in the United States is a medical as well as a social problem. Because of the great lethality of handguns and their very limited ability to provide personal protection, handgun injury can best be reduced by making handguns less available. Handgun control cannot reduce rates of crime or interpersonal assault, but it can reduce the frequency and severity of injury arising from these situations toward the much lower levels found in other countries. The involvement of children in the United States handgun injury epidemic warrants effective pediatrician involvement in efforts toward handgun control."

Source: Katherine K. Christoffel and Tom Christoffel, *Handguns as a Pediatric Problem*, *Injury Prevention* 1999;5:151-156, <http://ip.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/5/2/151>, accessed 09 May 2006.



The impact of small arms on children and youth needs to be addressed within a public health framework. During the education consultancy a document on public health approaches was produced. This document is on the SEESAC website and will also be disseminated to key stakeholders.²⁰ The public health framework has many advantages, which are discussed in section 3.2.

3.1 Unintentional Injuries and Deaths from Firearms

The proposal for some form of 'small arms risk education' for school children is based on the assumption that children are at risk of unintentional injury and death from finding and using guns, or of accidentally injuring or killing others. (Clearly a young person using a gun to attempt suicide is well aware of the risks and is using this method precisely because it is highly likely to be fatal.) Although there have been a number of tragic examples of children in the region finding guns and injuring themselves or others, the data has been available from press accounts and there is no way of knowing how frequent these occurrences are.

There is data available from the USA: an American Academy of Pediatrics position paper from 2000 gave the following data:²¹

- In 1996 7.2% (306) of children and adolescents below 20 years killed by firearms died as a result of unintentional firearm-related injuries;
- Only 6.5% of these deaths (20 of 306) involved children below 5 years. (Strong evidence that there is no need for 'gun safety' education for 4 - 5 year olds);
- However, deaths from unintentional firearm-related injuries account for a large proportion of firearm-related deaths of younger children; and
- 24% of firearm-related deaths in children below 5 years were due to unintentional shootings, 26% for children aged 5 - 9 years, 21% for adolescents aged 10 - 14 years and 5% for adolescents 15 - 19 years.

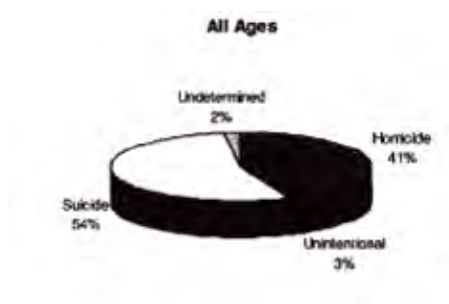


Figure 3: US 1997 firearm-related deaths for all ages (n=532436)



Figure 4: US 1997 firearm-related deaths for children (0-19 years) (n=54223)

3.2 Public Health

The public health approach to injury prevention is a coherent and well-established approach that is now being more widely applied to violence and small arms. Since 1996, the World Health Organization (WHO) has taken up the issue of violence as a public health issue, producing the *World Report on Violence and Health* in 2002, and follow-up reports in 2004 and 2005. WHO explicitly named small arms as a public health issue, and part of the issue of violence as a public health problem, in its report *Small Arms and Global Health* in 2001, WHO has also collaborated with UNDP on the Armed Violence Prevention Initiative (AVPI) programme.

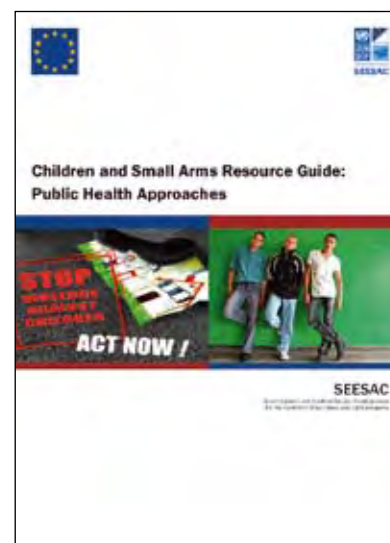
Most recently, the comprehensive account of small arms as a global issue, written by Wendy Cukier and Victor Siedel, *The Global Gun Epidemic: From Saturday Night Specials to AK-47s* (Praeger, 2006) takes an explicitly

²⁰ <http://www.seesac.org>.

²¹ Firearm-Related Injuries Affecting the Pediatric Population, American Academy of Pediatrics, p. 888 <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/105/4/888>, accessed 14 March 2006.

public health approach. The advantages of the public health approach to the issue of children and small arms are:

- *“It is an evidence-based approach, which begins with data collection before decisions are made about the need for programmes or the kinds of programmes;*
- *There is already a large body of scientific and medical research on public health which can inform discussion of the particular problems posed by small arms;*
- *It attempts to ascertain why a problem occurs, the risk factors, and the factors that could be modified through targeted interventions;*
- *It adopts a scientific approach to designing, implementing and evaluating programmes;*
- *It works on multiple levels, individual, relationship, community and societal, and adopts an ecological approach, that is, that no single factor can account for the problem of violence, and there is an interaction of factors at different levels;*
- *It includes advocacy by medical organisations on the issue;*
- *It focuses on the needs of survivors of small arms injuries, a still neglected issue; and*
- *By applying a public health approach WHO hoped to broaden the definition of the problem beyond the realm of legal, industrial, strategic or tactical considerations and to introduce to this discussion the public health community’s longstanding emphasis on scientific methodologies and prevention. In doing so, it brings into the arena a large body of scientific work which has been carried out over the past few decades on small arms and violence by a variety of public health institutions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and individual researchers operating at local, national and international levels”.*²²



Picture 3: Front cover of Public Health report

In the report *Small Arms and Global Health*, published in 2001, WHO made the following points:

- *“In the past few years, firearms-related death and injury have been called everything from a ‘scourge’ to an ‘epidemic’, a ‘disease’ and a ‘preventable global health problem’;*
- *The biological analogies are not accidental or far-fetched. Among people aged 15-44 years, interpersonal violence and suicide rank third and fourth, respectively among the world’s leading causes of ill-health and premature mortality, while war-related injuries rank sixth. A large proportion of these occur through the use of firearms”;* and
- *There has been a global recognition of violence as a public health problem since 1996.*

WHO outlines the impacts of small arms injuries, which can:

- *“Lead to temporary and permanent disability;*
- *Destroy the capacity to work;*
- *Place a heavy burden on the families of victims, and the society;*
- *Increase tension, especially in poor environments; and*
- *Generate more violence”.*²³

In addition, firearms are one of the main causes of brain injury, and mental health problems are known to be more common in societies where violence is common and armed violence has devastating effects on social relationships, sometimes contributing to an ongoing cycle of violence.

²² *Small Arms and Global Health*, WHO, 2001 http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2001/WHO_NMH_VIP_01.1.pdf, accessed 17 August 2006.

²³ *Ibid.*



Small arms have an intensifying effect on suicide:

- Research in Western societies shows that the availability of civilian firearms influences the percentage of suicides committed with a firearm;
- Suicide attempts with guns are more likely to be lethal; 30% of all male suicides are perpetrated with a firearm and 13% of all female suicides; and
- Suicide is a major cause of death for young men.²⁴

The public health approach involves the scientific analysis of risk factors, which WHO classifies in four groups:

- *“Factors that influence the use of small arms over other possible choices of weapon;*
- *Factors that influence interpersonal violence;*
- *Factors that influence self-directed violence (i.e. suicide); and*
- *Factors that influence collective violence”.*

These factors are not mutually exclusive and violent firearm use usually involves a complex mix of the four factors.²⁵

As a result of the background research done on children and small arms, it became clear that the public health approach was lacking in discussions of the issue in SEE, and the resource guide *Children and Small Arms Resource Guide: Public Health Approaches* was produced, disseminated to partners and stakeholders, and placed on the SEESAC website. In relation to SEE, there have been some initiatives following up the WHO reports²⁶ and SEESAC and WHO cooperated to produce the report: *Strategic overview of armed violence data collection and analysis mechanisms (South Eastern Europe)*.²⁷ This research found that there is a paucity of data on the impact of small arms in the region, particularly in relation to children and young people, and that what data is available is not used to inform policy making. As already noted, there have been a number of excellent public health studies in Croatia, dealing both with the impact of weapons and children and evaluating the education programme conducted in the 1990s.

Box 7: Childhood Injuries

“... injuries, as a policy issue, have no owner. The policies needed to reduce injuries require concerted action by a wide range of people. These include the obvious ones, such as teachers and health professionals. But there are many others. They include the manufacturers of objects that children come into contact with (e.g., toys or medicine container), the architects and town planners, who may or may not incorporate safety features in their designs, the police, whose stance on road safety is crucial, and builders, who should know why they should not leave electrical wires exposed. Most important of all, they include the politicians who develop the policies on safety and social inclusion that set the context for everyone else. Unfortunately, many of these groups may be completely unaware of the part they have to play.”

Comment: Awareness about the impact of small arms in SEE could be used as a lever to raise awareness about all forms of childhood injury, of which firearms injury are but a small part.

Source: http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2006/10/21819_en.pdf

From the perspective of the public health approach, education interventions can be **universal**, that is directed at unselected populations of children or young people, typically in a classroom setting, or **selective**, targeting children or young people known or believed to be at risk.²⁸ All of the small arms education projects in SEE

²⁴ http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2001/WHO_NMH_VIP_01.1.pdf p. 13, accessed 17 August 2006.

²⁵ *Op cit* p. 17.

²⁶ For further information see http://www.euro.who.int/InformationSources/Publications/Catalogue/20060601_1, accessed 14 September 2006.

²⁷ *Strategic overview of armed violence data collection and analysis mechanisms (South Eastern Europe)*, Larry Attree of Transition International, SEESAC, 2006, <http://www.seesac.org>.

²⁸ <http://www.drugs.gov.uk/publication-search/acmd/pathways-to-problems/Pathwaystoproblems.pdf?view=Binary>, accessed 14 September 2006.



have been universal, targeting young girls equally with adolescent boys, in spite of the huge discrepancy in risk factors.

3.3 Development and Small Arms

UNDP and other organizations continue to make the case for the negative impact of small arms on development. While this seems intuitively obvious, there is still very limited hard data for SEE to demonstrate this link, but rather a general picture that increased levels of organized crime may deter investment and a sense of insecurity limits people's commitment to rebuilding society after the recent conflicts and disorder in the region. Many young people express the desire to leave the region, as they see few educational and economic opportunities.

3.4 Security

There is now a much greater focus on 'security' and an increasing awareness that this issue must include consideration of young people. Macintyre and Weiss have recently looked at the issue of small arms proliferation, youth and security in the African context, but they make a number of important points of general relevance:

- All three elements, small arms, youth and security stand alone as research, policy and advocacy issues but there is value in a crosscutting analysis;
- It is important not to establish youth and small arms as another niche;²⁹
- *"There is a profound need for youth and child centred perspectives on human security issues if the term 'human security' is to have any real meaning;"*
- Approaches to children affected by armed conflict (and potentially affected by arms proliferation) have focused on the child as victim;
- Where there is evidence of demand from young people, the issue needs to be looked at more deeply (social spaces: urban and gang violence; economic spaces: children may see a need to own arms to protect livelihoods; political spaces: exclusion and exploitation);
- *"The status of child and youth rights in a given society is an indicator of the overall functioning of the state of governance, and of the management of strategic resources. Child and youth demands for protection, education, opportunities, if not met by the family, community and state, can shift over brief or extended periods, to demand for arms. Within this transition comes the economic reliance on, social acceptance of and increasing proliferation of guns, along with higher human tolls incurred in conflict;"*
- Currently there is no evidence that this analysis applies in South Eastern Europe, but there is the potential for young men to become involved in armed violence (there are high youth populations in Albania and Kosovo, poor educational opportunities and high youth unemployment);³⁰
- This article offers a very important corrective to views of youth as passive victims, not agents responding to real situations; and
- The view of children and youth as victims of small arms proliferation, which is not supported by the evidence in SEE, can lead to ill-advised school-based programmes rather than focusing on legislation, enforcement and weapons collections from gun owners, who are overwhelmingly adult males.³¹

The Department of Youth and Culture in Kosovo has just developed a national Plan for Youth, in consultation with young people themselves.³² One of the six themes identified by young people was 'human security'. It would be important for donors to support projects developed from the national plan, rather than targeting funds to very specific issues such as small arms, when there is no evidence that the issue is a high priority for young people.

²⁹ Emphasis added.

³⁰ Angela Raven-Roberts, Regional Emergency Advisor, UNICEF, Geneva is currently working on a paper on the 'militarisation' of livelihoods in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

³¹ Angela McIntyre and Tara Weiss, *Exploring Small Arms Demand: A Youth Perspective* p. 67.

³² Personal communication, Mr Dritan Shala, Ministry of Youth and Culture, Kosovo, 25 November 2006.



3.5 Crime

In some countries small arms have a disproportionate impact on young people involved in gang violence and other forms of juvenile offending/delinquency. There is no evidence that guns play a significant role in juvenile offending in SEE. Some informants have noted that there is a problem with a minority of boys using knives and other 'cold weapons', and have expressed the concern that they could 'graduate' to guns, but there is no evidence for this.³³ The issue of violence among young people is complex. One US study of inner city youth attending schools with high levels of violence, found that young people identified the causes of violence on multiple levels: individual, familial, interpersonal and communal. Most had been in a physical fights and although they saw fighting as not 'right', they believed it was a necessary problem solving tool, which could also prevent the escalation of violence. These young people felt that adults could not give good advice about violence, as their experiences were so different from those of young people. The authors conclude:

"Interventions that include blanket admonitions against fighting should be reassessed in light of youth perceptions that fighting plays a complex role in both inciting and preventing more serious violence".³⁴

A number of crime prevention programmes have been developed in South Africa, including Tiisa Thuto:

"Tiisa Thuto is primarily a school community-based crime prevention intervention that forms part of Business Against Crime South Africa, South Africa's broader social crime prevention portfolio. Specifically, the initiative targets learners, educators, parents and to some degree, members of school governing bodies. Its sites of implementation are both primary and secondary schools that are known to be having poor relationships with communities they are supposed to serve, dysfunctional, and crime-ridden".³⁵

Another programme, 'gun free South Africa' included a schools component, declaring schools as gun free zones.³⁶

Governments in the region, supported by UNDP, have begun a number of 'safe community' projects, linked with community policing. These are promising ways of responding to crime and people's security concerns. It is important that young people be given the opportunity to participate in such programmes. There is now a 'European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life' which includes a policy on youth involvement in reducing violence and crime:

³³ Inspector Cena Calovska, and others. Inspector Calovska and a few colleagues started a voluntary education programme in schools.

³⁴ S B Johnson, S Frattaroli, J L Wright, C B Pearson-Fields, T L Cheng, Urban youths' perspectives on violence and the necessity of fighting, Injury Prevention 2004;10:287-291. doi: 10.1136/ip.2004.005793, accessed 07 June 2006.

³⁵ http://www.bac.co.za/Page_Proj_TT_Intro_MainFrame.htm accessed 07 June 2006 and 'What is Tiisa Thuta?' paper sent by Poppy Khala, Project Manager, email 7 June 2006. Contact: Poppy@bac.org.za.

³⁶ Adele Kirsten, 'Islands of Safety in a Sea of Guns: Gun-Free Zones in South Africa's Fothane, Diepkloof and Khayelitsha' http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/sas/publications/w_papers_pdf/WP/WP3_SouthAfrica.PDF accessed 02 May 2006.

**Box 8: Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in
Local and Regional Life**

“1.11 A policy to combat violence and crime

31. Bearing in mind that the victims of crime and violence are often young people, and recognising the necessity of finding adequate responses to the crime and violence in contemporary society, as well as the need to involve young people directly in combating these problems;

32. Local and regional authorities should:

- i. include young people in crime prevention councils, where these exist;
- ii. work in particular with young people who risk being involved in crime or who have already been involved in crime;
- iii. combat racist violence by all means available;
- iv. tackle all forms of violence in schools. This should be done in co-operation with all relevant actors, such as educational and police authorities, teachers, parents and young people themselves;
- v. contribute to the creation of networks of associations and projects promoting non-violence projects and tolerance both in school and out of school;
- vi. do their utmost to protect young people from sexual exploitation, abuse or other forms of maltreatment and provide structures that provide psychological and material support and confidential consultation to victims.

33. In implementing the above, local and regional authorities contribute towards building a climate of trust and respect between young people and public authorities such as the police.”

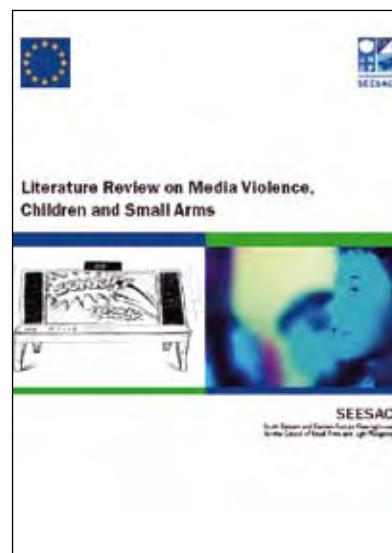
Source: www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/youth/TXT_charter_participation.pdf, pp. 91-100, accessed 14 May 2006

3.6 Media Violence

One of the key issues in examining the impact of small arms on children is the role of the media. No studies on media violence were identified for the region, but concern was expressed in research done in Montenegro about the effect of increasing violence in the media. The media can impact on children through programmes about the recent conflicts, imported films and TV shows full of violence, and violent computer and video games. A *Literature Review on Media Violence, Children and Small Arms* was developed as part of the Education Consultancy to assist policy makers to become aware of the relevant issues.³⁷ The Literature Review includes references to key documents such as the UNESCO *Global Study on Media Violence*, statements by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Psychological Association, and a BBC study on how children interpret media violence.

To summarise the available data, research has now confirmed the link between media violence and aggressive behaviour.³⁸ If young people also have ready access to guns, then the likelihood of violent behaviour, against themselves and others, increases.

A number of informants have expressed concern about the role of the media in stimulating interest in weapons.³⁹ There is much anecdotal evidence of children, especially in Kosovo and Macedonia, spending significant amounts of time playing the violent video game ‘Counterstrike’, but no studies of the impact of violence in the media on children in South Eastern Europe were identified.



**Picture 3: Front cover of Media
Violence report**

³⁷ <http://www.seesac.org>.

³⁸ American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Public Education: Media Violence, PEDIATRICS Vol. 108 No. 5 November 2001, p. 3.

³⁹ Including a number of speakers at the Consultation on Education and Small Arms held in Belgrade in June 2006, and the Education Consultant doing research in Montenegro on children and small arms. The Education Consultant has seen children as young as 5 spending hours in Internet cafes in Kosovo playing ‘Counterstrike’, in the absence of other recreational possibilities.



The American Psychological Association published a resolution on violent video games and interactive media. Their findings were:

- Decades of social science research reveal the strong influence of televised violence on the aggressive behaviour of young people;
- Perpetrators go unpunished in 73% of all violent scenes and so teach that violence is an effective means of resolving conflict; and
- Analysis of research on violent interactive video games shows that exposure to such games:
 - Increases aggressive behaviour;
 - Increases aggressive thoughts;
 - Increases angry thoughts;
 - Decreases helpful behaviour; and
 - Increases physiological arousal.⁴⁰

The Americans for Gun Safety Foundation highlights the paradox that while many parents and teachers are teaching children 'gun safety', at the same time many children are receiving the opposite messages from video and computer games:

"Simply put, while most parents teach their kids the 'do's' of gun safety; these games teach them the 'don'ts'. In households across the country, children are playing games with startlingly realistic, computer-generated versions of the very guns that may be available in their own homes. Armed with these virtual weapons, children embark on remarkably life-like simulations of horrifying acts of gun violence in video games played on computers, the Internet or home gaming systems. While many of these games are intended to represent a fantasy world, game makers strive to replicate real-life settings, adding detail to the weapons and to the carnage they reap, thus blurring the line between fantasy and reality".⁴¹

There is clearly a need to consider the impact of the media on attitudes of children and young people to violence and guns, and to introduce media literacy education in schools. It is obviously naïve to believe that a couple of low-tech lessons in school can counteract the impact.

3.7 'Gun Culture'

One of the issues that arises in discussion of the impact of small arms is whether some countries have a 'gun culture'. SEESAC commissioned a study that examined whether there is a 'gun culture' in SEE that would hinder weapons collection programmes.⁴² The concept of 'gun culture' is very unclear, and the study was unable to provide an internationally accepted definition. It is important that policy and programmes are not based on imprecise and contested concepts such as 'gun culture'.

In spite of conceptual weaknesses, the findings of the study provide general background information for considering the issue of children and small arms. Some, including local respondents, claim there is a 'gun culture' in SEE, and it is part of tradition for men to own guns.⁴³ However, the majority of respondents in surveys in the region, more than 95% (in Montenegro, 80%) stated that 'tradition' was not the main reason why people owned guns.

The main reasons given for gun ownership by civilians were:

- Personal security;

⁴⁰ <http://www.apa.org/releases/resolutiononviolence.pdf>, accessed 25 July 2006.

⁴¹ http://www.agsfoundation.com/media/games_report.pdf, accessed 12 April 2006.

⁴² 'The rifle has the devil inside' Gun Culture in South Eastern Europe, SEESAC, 2006, <http://www.seesac.org>.

⁴³ SALW Survey of Montenegro, BICC/SEESAC, 2004.

- Protection of property;
- Criminal activities; and
- Sport and leisure activities.

3.8 Gender

Small arms is a highly gendered issue, although gender is often invisible in such terms as 'parents' (meaning fathers, who are overwhelmingly gun owners), 'gun owners' (overwhelmingly men, mostly over 30), and children (when referring to interest in weapons, mostly boys).

Box 9: Gender and Violence

"I read of a nursery teacher reprimanding a boy for playing guns. 'Why don't you go and build with bricks', she suggested. A few minutes later, the boy was running about with some bricks going 'bang bang'. 'What are you doing?' She cried. He said, 'I'm shooting you with my house'."

Source: Lynn Davies 'Education and Conflict', 2004, RoutledgeFarmer, p. 72

- Domestic violence is clearly of the key gender issues in relation to small arms and violence. It will be referred to in each of the country sections on impact;
- The international data indicate that death rates of young men (15 - 24 years) worldwide are much higher than for young women, the main causes of death being traffic accidents and homicides and young men are the main perpetrators of gun violence;
- Women and girls have different attitudes to guns from men and boys;
- Parents differ in attitudes to guns in the home, and in some cases the woman in a household is not aware that there are firearms present;
- There are differences in risk-taking, between boys and girls, especially at adolescence;
- While young men are the main victims and perpetrators of armed violence, they should not be demonised, but rather the causes should be investigated and evidence-based prevention programmes implemented; and
- Girls and women should not be the targets of awareness/education campaigns giving information about the dangers of weapons: the evidence is that most already know that. Rather women should be participants at all levels in arms control programmes and awareness campaigns, and their concerns should be an integral part of all policies and programmes.



4 Impact of Small Arms on Children in South Eastern Europe

One of the problems in considering the possible impact of small arms on children and young people is the lack of data, particularly age disaggregated data. What is noteworthy is the lack of information about serious impact on children and young people, in terms of unintentional injuries, homicide and injuries caused by violence, and suicide. In all countries of the region there have been SALW Surveys, and these have been consulted for any data relevant to the issue of impact on children.

In South Eastern Europe (SEE), small arms impact on children through the continuing effects of the conflicts of the 1990s:

- Displacement as a result of the conflicts;
- A sense of insecurity among some adults resulting in gun ownership; and
- The potential for conflicts to become violent given the excessive number of weapons in civilian hands, many left over from the conflicts of the 1990s.

It is important to note, however, that the specific impact on children was not part of the brief of these SALW Surveys. Recently SEESAC and WHO commissioned research on armed violence collection and analysis in the region. The study concluded that as well as a lack of data, there was also no evidence that available data was used to inform policy-making:

“Nowhere in SEE is continuously gathered, reliable information on injuries inflicted by small arms and light weapons (SALW) clearly connected to policy-making circles, and made a routine part of national strategies, action plans and other laws or initiatives.”

The authors note that governments in the region might be reluctant to spend the necessary funds to create effective data collection and analysis systems because:

- In countries where the rate of small arms possession is high the threat may be potential rather than actual (related to the outbreak of large scale violence); and
- In other countries levels of injury due to armed violence are low, and available public health resources would more appropriately be spent on public health issues such as smoking and traffic accidents.

This is a crucial point, as governments must decide on priorities for spending, and should not merely react to concern about a ‘new’ issue. Notwithstanding the above comments, the authors of the study suggested that SEE countries could improve armed violence data collection and analysis with relatively minor adjustments to existing systems.⁴⁴

4.1 Youth Concerns

Although there have been a number of surveys of the attitudes of young people to SALW in the region, the quality of these surveys has generally been poor, making it difficult to draw any conclusions to inform policy and programme development. There is also the problem that these surveys are mostly based on ‘yes/no’ questions, and give no indication of the priority that young people place on the issue. A report on young people (15 - 25 years) in SEE in August 2005 by the OneWorld SEE team, indicated that the main concerns of young people were high unemployment, the deterioration of education systems, apathy, a sense of helplessness, a desire to leave their countries, the brain drain, and consumerism resulting in drug abuse and petty crime.

In Albania the main issues were: pessimism, apathy a desire to move abroad, unemployment and a lack of respect for young people from the ‘system’. Young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed concerns about low levels of social participation due to serious economic problems, high unemployment, apathy in society, the complicated and bureaucratic political system, the outdated education system and the lack of awareness of ways to improve the situation. In Croatia the main concerns were passivity and lack of confidence; many young people have

⁴⁴ Strategic overview of armed violence data collection and analysis mechanisms (South Eastern Europe), SEESAC 2006, p. 4.



already left the country. In Montenegro young people associated the following problems with the word 'youth': dissatisfaction with their social status, with the education system, cultural life, entertainment, employment policies and the problems of alcohol and drug abuse. As a result of concerns about poverty, high unemployment, religious and ethnic intolerance, the rising crime rate and corruption, it is not surprising that 80% of young people surveyed see their lives abroad. Youth in Kosovo were mainly concerned with high unemployment and education. Young people in Serbia commented that more than half have never been abroad nor seen the sea, they were affected by decades of war, impoverishment, rising crime rates, huge social changes, high unemployment. Large numbers of young people have left the country, and those remaining are very dissatisfied.

	ALBANIA	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	CROATIA	KOSOVO	MACEDONIA	MONTENEGRO	SERBIA
Unemployment	x			x		x	x
Desire to leave country	x		x				x
Poor quality education				x		x	x
Few cultural and entertainment opportunities						x	
Low social participation		x					
Pessimism	x	x					
Apathy	x	x	x				
Lack of respect for young people	x					x	
Religious and ethnic intolerance						x	

Table 1: Survey of young people's concerns in SEE

Given these serious concerns of young people, it is not helpful to focus on one issue, the excess of small arms in the region, and fund projects and programmes attempting to reduce the number of arms, and in some cases, give 'risk education' to young people. One can imagine that attempts by education systems to educate on small arms would meet with cynicism and frustration when education is seen as failing many young people. Rather it would be more appropriate to facilitate the participation of young people in society and support them to respond to issues that are a high priority for them.⁴⁵

UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina has already started addressing the issue: their Youth Programme "was initiated following a dramatic set of survey results which revealed that a majority of young people wanted to leave the country".⁴⁶

4.2 Albania

Although there was concern in the late 1990s over the impact of SALW on public health and crime, following the looting of weapons storages, there has been a consistent decline in the number of casualties since that time. However, one third of Albanians still believe it is acceptable to possess a gun when the law is not enforced,

⁴⁵ <http://see.oneworld.net/article/view/116139?PrintableVersion=enabled>, pp. 1 - 8, accessed 15 November 2006.

⁴⁶ <http://www.undp.ba/?PID=25andRID=21>, accessed 14 November 2006.



blood feuds continue to be an issue in some areas,⁴⁷ and the awareness that weapons are dangerous does not translate into a willingness to surrender them.⁴⁸ It is likely, therefore, that some children and young people grow up with similar attitudes.

Furthermore, most murders are committed with firearms, firearms are often used in cases of domestic violence, and young men in their teens and twenties are most likely to be involved in the abuse of weapons. Due to poor record keeping and lack of capacity, only incomplete information is available from the police, hospitals and courts, thus hindering evidence-based public health responses to the impact of small arms.⁴⁹

In spite of the problems of availability and quality of data, there is some data on the impact of small arms: crime rates are higher in Albania than the average for East-Central Europe, and the proportion of suicides using firearms was higher than the global average in 1998. The household survey revealed that 6.15% of families had experienced a firearm-related crime in the previous year.

“This suggests (but does not prove) the negative impact of the accessibility of guns, particularly where property disputes, jealousy, alcoholism and depression generate a risk of violence or suicide”.⁵⁰

Box 10: ‘Hot arms, cold arms’ - guns and knives, Amnesty International Report on Domestic Violence in Albania

He came home and threatened to kill me with a pistol in front of the children, and the children protected me and came and stood in front of me and they said, “You have to kill us first.” (F).

Of concern is the finding in 1998, that 88 people aged 15 - 19 years committed suicide (53%) and of the total of all suicides, 59% (compared to a rate of 19.5% in the WHO *World Report on Violence and Health*) involved firearms.⁵¹ It would appear that the availability of firearms made it easier for people to commit suicide.

Around 85% of respondents said that the presence of firearms worsens or slightly worsens relationships within the family. Amnesty International’s 2005 report indicated that domestic violence against women was common, and small arms were a significant factor, although the precise extent is not known.⁵² Reporting of domestic violence in the media is very sensational, so it is difficult to reach any conclusions about the use of weapons.⁵³

Individual cases suggest the seriousness of the impact on children and the need to address the issue (see Box 10).

4.3 Bosnia and Herzegovina

The SALW Survey of BiH found that males were the victims in 76% of all violent deaths (accidents, homicides, suicides), reported for 1996 to 2002. There was no data on the role of small arms, but the Chief of the

⁴⁷ UNICEF in Albania has addressed the issue of children unable to access education as a result of blood feuds: 200 children have been reintegrated into school and several dozen are being home-schooled by visiting teachers. Clearly the presence of small arms is only one aspect of the problem of blood feuds, which has been addressed in a significant and successful way by Albanian society (both in Albania and in Kosovo). http://www.unicef.org/albania/protection_697.html, accessed 07 March 2006.

⁴⁸ *Turning the page: small arms and light weapons in Albania*, Center for Peace and Disarmament Education and Saferworld, December 2005 <http://www.seesac.org/reports/Turning%20the%20page%20Small%20Arms%20and%20Light%20Weapons%20in%20Albania.pdf>, p. 6.

⁴⁹ p. 7.

⁵⁰ p. 29.

⁵¹ p. 31.

⁵² <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR110022006>, p. 38, accessed 24 April 2006.

⁵³ *Ibid.* ‘Analysis by the Tirana Women’s Centre in 2001 of 207 media reports of domestic violence cases found that 62 per cent of reported cases involved the use of SALW; as the media tends more frequently to report domestic violence cases involving weapons, this figure probably over-represents their use.’ A coalition of women’s and children’s NGOs are advocating for changes in the law to deal more effectively with domestic violence.



Department for Blood and Sexual Crime for Sarajevo, reported that illegal weapons were involved in the majority of cases.⁵⁴ Most of the statistics on crime and violent death are not desegregated according to gender, and there is little information about children and young people. Some female students in focus groups saw small arms as a problem of male adolescents. The authors of the report commented that

“It could be fruitful for future attempts to control SALW to have a closer look at the hegemonic masculinity prevailing in the Bosnian culture of all ethnic groups.”⁵⁵

On the basis of statistics indicating that there were more deaths from small arms since the end of the conflict than from landmines, the Ministry of Education decided that there was a need to include material on small arms in the new Mine Risk Education curriculum. There is no evidence that an impact study was conducted.

Some surveys of youth have been conducted, but it is difficult to know how to interpret results, as the methodology is often not professional and the results ambiguous. For example: *“The recent research done by UNDP, have shown that 23% of elementary and high-school kids from BiH, had a gun in their hands, supervised by adults. Out of this number 14% had the opportunity to shoot from a gun, while 34% out of this number actually shot from a gun. All of this shows that the awareness raising activities are, not only justified but very much needed in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, said Seid Turković, UNDP Human Security Portfolio Manager*.”⁵⁶

One conclusion from this report would be that there should be more awareness raising activities for adults, as some are clearly acting as role models for their children in gun use, and children are learning from a trusted adult that guns can be handled without danger.

4.4 Croatia

The SALW Survey of Croatia was conducted in 2006, and made a number of interesting points not reflected in the other surveys from the region.⁵⁷ For example, the authors estimate that about half a million people remain traumatized by the armed conflict of the 1990s, and as a consequence, the rate of suicides is above the EU average, and a significant number were committed with guns. There are high levels of domestic violence, often involving people with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Sampling in early 2006 revealed an average of 12 such incidents per month, in many cases using weapons left over from the conflict.

*“This trend demonstrates the continuing need to tackle the linked problems of PTSD, domestic violence and unregistered firearms through enhanced law enforcement, awareness raising, support to victims and a firearms collection”.*⁵⁸

There are significant gender differences in attitudes to firearms: women generally are critical or highly critical of gun ownership, and see guns as threats to their communities, not a protection.⁵⁹ As expected, men are the main victims and perpetrators of armed crime (except for domestic violence), and there is a trend for young men, (under 26 years) to show great interest in firearms. Police report that overall levels of crime remain steady, but the level of violence and firearms-related crimes has increased dramatically. However, the authors also suggest that reporting levels are low, so the crime rate could be higher.⁶⁰ A media survey indicated that males in the age groups 16 - 25 years and 26 - 35 years accounted for more than half of all victims and perpetrators of armed violence.⁶¹

⁵⁴ <http://www.seesac.org/reports/SALW%20Survey%20BiH.pdf>, p. 32.

⁵⁵ p. 35

⁵⁶ <http://see.oneworld.net/article/view/121922/1/3189>, accessed 14 May 2006.

⁵⁷ This may be due to an increasing focus in SALW Surveys on the impact, rather than just a technical focus on the numbers of weapons and the legal situation.

⁵⁸ SALW Survey of Croatia, SEESAC, 2006. p. iii.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ p. 13.

⁶¹ p. 16.



Although domestic violence is probably also under-reported in Croatia, the levels reported are alarming. The Ministry of Veterans, Family and Inter-Generation Solidarity reported that police responded to 55,969 requests for intervention from 01 January 1999 to 31 December 2003. Of those injured, 27% were minors, and one in three women has been a victim of physical aggression by her partner at least once.⁶² Guns are involved in some of these cases, although there is no standardised method of reporting. Women's organisations see the causes as: mental health problems and the possession of weapons, along with alcoholism, drugs and unemployment.⁶³ The impact of this level of violence on children and young people is obvious, with weapons being one factor of a number.

There is clearly a problem in Croatia with changing male roles, as a result of economic uncertainty and transition and trauma caused by war. The effects of these changing roles, and the fact that some men have turned to violence (including against themselves) as ways of coping, on growing boys and young men should be a subject for serious study. Data on youth and small arms indicate that young men aged 16 to 25 years are a significant proportion of victims of gun-related violence, and some show a certain fascination with guns. There is no data on guns in schools, and a survey, in which the authors report on attitudes of young people towards guns, used such questionable statements that its validity must be doubted.⁶⁴

The public health approach seems to be more advanced in Croatia than in the other countries of the region. There was an editorial in the Croatian Medical Journal in 2002 on childhood injuries: 'Childhood Injury: A Call to Action'. The aim was to "raise awareness of the burden of avoidable death and disability" in Europe and Croatia in particular, in a context where "injuries are low on the policy agenda for various reasons, including their lack of visibility."⁶⁵ The main causes of childhood injury in Croatia are road accidents and drowning. Injuries and deaths due to mines and firearms are mentioned, but they are not significant numerically, although the authors do express concern about the ready access to firearms. "As with landmines, this is a legacy that will continue to cause deaths of children for many years in future."⁶⁶

A study was conducted in 1996 by the Police College in Zagreb, after the end of the war, to assess the awareness of children, parents and teachers, of the danger from firearms, landmines and other explosive devices. The survey sample was 1,910 primary school pupils from 20 schools, 3,283 parents and 344 teachers. As well as specially prepared questionnaires, interviews were conducted by trained social workers. The results showed that firearms and explosive devices were accessible to 19% of primary pupils, mostly those living in high-risk areas directly affected by the war. Almost one-third believed it was necessary to keep weapons at home, and their knowledge of the risks from weapons and what safety measures they could take, was insufficient.

"Pupils characterized by teachers as unsuccessful in school carried firearms and explosive devices more often than others, had more a positive approach to them, and a lower level of knowledge of a proper reaction in dangerous situations."

The authors advised that the planned National Programme for the protection of children from small arms and mine-explosive devices (1995-2005) should concentrate on showing TV spots, as they had the most impact on children, and focus more on education of parents and teachers in high-risk areas; while teachers should focus on boys from higher grades in school, include parents in educational activities, and give more attention to parents with lower levels of education. In addition, they advise that parents should not keep weapons at home and not allow children access to them and police should continue to reduce the number of illegal weapons in homes.⁶⁷

⁶² A recent media report, 23 October 2006 gives a figure of 68,717 cases of family violence reported to the police between 2001 and 2005. 83,322 people, the majority women, were assaulted; 20,342 were children. <http://www.undp.hr/upload/file/119/59754/FILENAME/EUSAC%20Croatia%20231006.doc>, accessed 30 October 2006.

⁶³ p. 18.

⁶⁴ p. 21. Unfortunately in the region a number of surveys have been conducted by small NGOs whose capacity to conduct a valid research study must be doubted. It is important not to quote flawed data, a problem in the field of small arms research.

⁶⁵ Martin McKee, Stjepan Oreškovic, 'Childhood Injury: Call to Action', <http://www.cmj.hr/2002/43/4/12187512.pdf>, accessed 12 May 2006, p. 375.

⁶⁶ *Op cit.* p. 377.

⁶⁷ Dragica Kozaric-Kovacevic, Mirjana Grubišić-Ilić, Ljubica Bakic-Tomic, Lana Rutic, Children's Awareness of Danger from Firearms, Land Mines, and Other Explosive Devices in Croatia, 1996 http://www.cmj.hr/1997/38/4/Kozaric_Kovacic.htm, accessed 12 September 2006.



Another study specifically addressed the issue of fatalities caused by weapons and explosives. The study compared the number of fatalities (due to the recent conflicts, suicides, murders and accidents) before, during and after the war in Croatia among children aged 0 - 14 years and 15 - 19 years. All types of violent deaths among children were lower in the pre-conflict period; while from 1991 - 2002 the conflict had direct and indirect consequences leading to increased numbers of all types of violent deaths. Post-conflict rates were double those of the pre-conflict period.⁶⁸ Twenty one per cent of parents kept firearms at home and 9% allowed their children to handle them. *“Parents from high-risk areas were also more tolerant to firearms and explosive devices, kept them at home more often, and believed that their children were well informed about dangers and protection measures.”*

FATALITIES CAUSED BY WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVE DEVICES AMONG CHILDREN IN CROATIA IN THE PRE-CONFLICT, CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT PERIOD			
TYPE	PRE-CONFLICT (1986 - 1990)	DURING (1991 - 1995)	POST-CONFLICT (1996 - 2002)
All deaths due to weapons and explosives	4.8%	27.3%	11.7%
Suicides	21% (33)	53.1% (104)	42.2% (256)
Accidents	1.5% (16)	9.9% (103)	3% (27)
Murders	26.4% (14)	54.1% (85)	48.3% (58)
War		82.9% (238)	

Table 2: Weapons and explosives fatalities Croatia 1986 – 2002

This research is characterized by a public health approach, and has been published in peer-reviewed journals. It is clear that public health professionals should have a greater involvement in researching the issue of the impact of small arms, and developing programmes based on evidence from the research. In this regard it is of concern that the Ministry of the Interior is currently planning a small arms collection campaign, including interventions with school children, without the involvement of public health professionals.

A survey on the main issues affecting children in Croatia in 2003 did not identify small arms or security as priority issues, but child protection against violence was of high priority.

⁶⁸ Fatalities Caused by Weapons and Explosive Devices among Children in Croatia in the pre-war, war and post-war period. Authors: A.Mujkic, U.Rodin, G.Vuletic, copy of abstract obtained from Dr Ada Mujkic, 17 March 2006.



What are currently three most important issues that need to be addressed for the benefit of children in Croatia?
(February 2003)

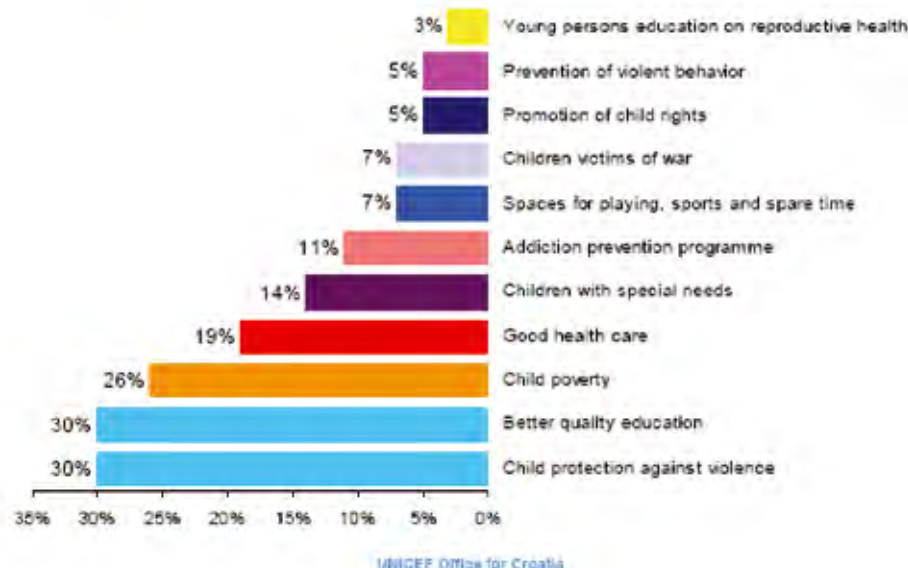


Figure 5: Data on priority issues for children, UNICEF Croatia, 2003 ⁶⁹

4.5 FYR Macedonia ⁷⁰

The SALW Survey of Macedonia dates from 2004: there is no readily available recent data prior to that. There is a range of problems with the impact data available;⁷¹ however, there is no evidence that there is a serious public health impact of SALW. Data from media analysis for 2000 and 2002 indicate that 10% of all gunshot victims were minors, compared to 30% aged 19 - 30 years.⁷²

As in other countries of the region, the question of whether there is a 'gun culture' which would obviously impact on the attitudes of children and young people to guns, is controversial, and based on opinions rather than any hard evidence. While some local and international commentators agree that there were 'gun cultures' in the past, there is no agreement about the current situation (2004), and it is difficult to research in the context of polarisation of ethnic groups.

A majority of respondents in the survey believed that guns were dangerous, and there were too many in Macedonia, but 40% said they would acquire a gun legally if possible.

"These statistics beg inquiry into the factors underlying these seemingly contradictory views. The research suggests that the answer lies in Macedonians perception of the environment in which they live. Focus group participants say that gunfire at festivities such as weddings and baptisms, sporting events, and other celebrations is common in Macedonia. Guns are

⁶⁹ http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2006/10/21819_en.pdf, accessed 07 March 2006.

Discussion with the UNICEF Education Officer in 2006 supported this data from 2003 that small arms were not a priority issue for children and young people.

⁷⁰ Referred to as Macedonia for the remainder of this report.

⁷¹ SALW Survey of Macedonia, see Box 6.1 on p. 49 <http://www.seesac.org/reports/macedoniaWEB.pdf>, accessed 15 November 2006.

⁷² p. 51. Data for 2001 was not analysed, as it was the period of conflict between armed Albanian groups and the security services of the country.



also found in bars and nightclubs on a regular basis. Approximately 25 college-age citizens explained that guns are considered 'fashionable'. Despite the view that guns represent a desire to be 'trendy' rather than a desire to engage in violence, the majority of the population, according to focus group participants, believes that guns are used primarily for the purpose of intimidation and the resolution of conflict. They suggest that quarrels and disagreements are now more likely to escalate into violence with the use of weapons than they were years ago, when such behaviour was very uncommon and nearly unthinkable".⁷³

Clearly there is a problem in Macedonian society in that children and young people receive strong messages that violence and the use of firearms are acceptable ways of dealing with conflicts. The authors of the report speculate that the 'hegemonic masculinity' present in all ethnic groups could be related to small arms ownership, and since the economic situation precludes the traditional male role, the power symbolized by weapons may be a form of compensation.⁷⁴ Women were more likely to express dislike of having weapons in the house, and to be less likely to acquire weapons legally for security reasons. As in the rest of the region, the issue of domestic violence is under-reported and not treated with sufficient seriousness. State bodies introduced statistics on domestic violence in 2004, but no data was available for this report. Women's NGOs report that firearms are frequently involved in domestic violence.⁷⁵ In 2004 a survey on the attitudes of high school students to firearms proliferation in Macedonia was conducted. The poll surveyed 595 17 and 18 year olds. The majority of students, 80%, said that their friends had never brought a firearm to school.

A very high percentage of men and women said they never see guns in their area, or rarely see them: 84.7% (men), 93.1% (women). The majority also reported feeling safe in their neighbourhood, however, they also said that there were too many guns in their area. The reason for this discrepancy seems to be that those with 'too many' guns are criminal groups.⁷⁶

4.6 Kosovo

The 2006 SALW Survey of Kosovo concluded that the impact of SALW on public health, in terms of firearms-related homicides, injuries and suicides, was not severe. The main concern about firearms in society is their potential use during periods of tension, as most people report holding weapons for protection, and there was a significant increase in firearms-related deaths and injuries during the riots in 2004.⁷⁷ Although the overall homicide rate is declining, the percentage of murders involving firearms is increasing. UNMIK Police keep separate statistics by age: the number of victims and perpetrators below 12 years is negligible, while 8.7% of suspects in murder cases were juveniles, aged 13 - 18 years.⁷⁸ The statistics on suicides differ widely according to the source, so it is not possible to draw any conclusions. Police keep data on reported domestic violence: guns were involved in only a small minority of cases.

Focus groups interviews produced some anecdotes on the impact of small arms on children, as did the press review, but the quality of this data is not sufficient to draw any useful conclusions. Firearms are not an issue in schools: the UNICEF study on bullying in schools did not report any incidents involving weapons,⁷⁹ and this was confirmed by a senior member of the Ministry of Education and Science, who said the Ministry was aware of the large number of weapons in the community, but it was not an issue in schools.⁸⁰ Focus groups discussions did not reveal any consistent views on whether there is a 'gun culture' in Kosovo.⁸¹

⁷³ p. 53.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ p. 57.

⁷⁷ SALW Survey of Kosovo, SEESAC, 2006: p.22 <http://www.seesac.org/reports/SALW%20Survey%20of%20Kosovo.pdf>, accessed 10 October 2006.

⁷⁸ p. 25.

⁷⁹ p. 35.

⁸⁰ Interview with Ms Miranda Kasneci, Deputy Head, Division of Pre-University Education, Pristina, Kosovo, 11 April 2006.

⁸¹ pp. 50-51.



There have been sporadic education and awareness campaigns on SALW since 2001, some targeting children and young people (surprising in view of the lack of data suggesting there is a problem). Such campaigns have failed to encourage people to hand in weapons.

“Current funding for this type of work comes almost exclusively from UNDP Kosovo, and its renewal is not expected in 2006. Past trends suggest it is unlikely that indigenous actors and institutions will carry on similar work beyond that time. Since no discernible attempt has been made to apply best practices in this field, the capacities for effective and targeted awareness-raising campaigns are also likely to be limited.”⁸²

4.7 Montenegro⁸³

The SALW Survey of Montenegro conducted in 2004 indicated that there were large numbers of legal and illegal weapons in civilian hands. Rates of weapons-related violent crime are high in Montenegro compared to the region, with pistols being used in 85% of homicides reported in 2003. Young men mostly abuse small arms in late night bar fights, gang fights, suicides and firing during celebrations.⁸⁴ The majority of victims and perpetrators of gun violence are young, over 45% were aged 15 to 29 years.⁸⁵ As only broad age categories are reported, 0 - 14 years, 15 - 29 years, 30 - 45 years, it is impossible to know the numbers of 15-18 year olds involved. The number of victims and perpetrators under 15 years was negligible. The public health impact of small arms is serious, as 27 fatalities and 61 injuries were reported in the press for 2003; by comparison only 3 of 25 stabbings resulted in fatalities. The overwhelming majority of deaths and injuries were young men, 90%.⁸⁶

The main reasons for having weapons are for protection of self or family (43.8%) and protection of property (15.2%), while 10% had weapons for hunting.⁸⁷ There is some confusion about whether owning a weapon is part of Montenegrin ‘tradition’ or not: many expressed this view in focus groups, but the household survey data indicated that almost 50% of people would choose not to own a gun. Dr Anda Backovic, of the Ministry of Education, and a psychologist, expressed the view that there was a ‘gun culture’ in Montenegro. The survey found a surprising result, that men and women were equally represented in the 84.4% of respondents who believed there were too many guns in Montenegro.⁸⁸ Focus group participants were also concerned about the role of the mass media in making weapons attractive to young men.

In terms of the impact of small arms on children and young people, no concrete data was reported in the survey, and the attitudes to guns suggests a certain confusion in messages that may reach young people. As a result of meetings with Dr Backovic, who pointed out that it was not possible to consider the question of the need for material on small arms in the curriculum due to the lack of data, and meetings with UNICEF to discuss the results of the ‘violence in schools’ project, it was decided to commission research on the impact of small arms on children, and the attitudes of parents and children to small arms.

The impact study attempted to gain information from as many sources as possible: the Ministry of the Interior, the Health Ministry, courts and the residential institution for children.⁸⁹ There were a small number of incidents involving children and small arms, both as victims and perpetrators. It also reported on the UNICEF study on ‘Violence in Schools’: this study found that bullying was widespread and that adults, both parents and teachers, were not perceived as responsive to children’s concerns about bullying and violence. The study also reported a high rate of media violence, of concern to many adults, as it is a relatively recent phenomenon in Montenegro.

⁸² p. 76.

⁸³ Montenegro became independent in 2006. Separate SALW Surveys were carried out on Serbia and Montenegro while both were part of the Union.

⁸⁴ <http://www.seesac.org/reports/survey-montenegro-eng.pdf>, accessed 10 May 2006, p. i.

⁸⁵ p. 16.

⁸⁶ p. 18.

⁸⁷ p. 19.

⁸⁸ p. 21.

⁸⁹ *Children and Weapons In Montenegro – A Review of Data and Research*, SEESAC, 2006, <http://www.seesac.org>.



While the data available does not support a view that small arms have a significant impact on children and young people in Montenegro, this study contributes to the view that there is a need for parents, teachers and government agencies to take the issue of violence in society more seriously. Given the widespread perception of children that adults rarely talk with them about violence, or report incidents, it is very doubtful that any attempt to introduce 'small arms risk education' would be of any value. Rather, adults need to be more responsive to the concerns of children, and collect better data about the impact of violence on children.

4.8 Serbia

Data, both medical and crime statistics are generally unavailable or insufficient, thus limiting the possibility of analysing the impact of small arms on the community. Some trends are evident: armed robbery and homicides committed with firearms are increasing.⁹⁰ As in the region, Serbs say they have firearms to protect themselves, their families and property; at the same time, they do not see a lack of security as the biggest problem they face. Most people do not come into contact with gun-related crime, so they are unlikely to be concerned about the number of firearms in the community.⁹¹ On the question of whether there is a 'gun culture' in Serbia, opinions were equally divided.⁹² A significant percentage of people do not trust the state or the police. The rate of suicides committed with firearms is quite low by international standards: 15% (compared to 54% in the USA).⁹³ The homicide rate using firearms is relatively high, although lower than for Albania, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Romania (2002 figures). Firing guns during celebrations is quite common, but it does not seem to concern the police or the public.⁹⁴

A study of domestic violence in Serbia found that weapons were used in 7.4% of cases and that in 15% of cases the perpetrator had participated 'in the war' and that violence by such men was more brutal and more likely to involve a weapon.⁹⁵ The study on domestic violence for the WHO global study did not include data on weapons.⁹⁶ A study on the epidemiology of suicide in Serbia and Montenegro, from 1989 to 2003, found that the number of suicides increased during the war years, reaching a peak in 1993. Male suicides, which outnumber female suicides by a ratio of 2:1, decreased slightly after the war, then increased to another peak in 2003, with a rate of 29/100,000. The use of firearms as the means of suicide doubled during and after the war years.⁹⁷ In 2003, the NGO Balkan Youth Union conducted a survey on the attitudes of young people to small arms. They interviewed 2,200 children and young people, aged 13 to 19 years. It is not possible to draw any conclusions from this study as:

- The data is very difficult to interpret: it is stated that 2,200 children and young people participated, but results are reported for 1,481;
- For unexplained reasons, 71.8% of respondents were female, and only 28.2% male;
- The young men did not take the exercise very seriously;
- The survey was conducted in the period following the assassination of the Prime Minister, Zoran Djindjic, and the subsequent state of emergency;
- Despite efforts, the Ministry of Education did not give permission for the study; and

⁹⁰ *Living with the Legacy: SALW Survey of Serbia*, SEESAC 2005, p. 1 http://www.seesac.org/reports/SerbianSurvey_eng.pdf, accessed 01 September 2006.

⁹¹ p. 2.

⁹² p. 12.

⁹³ p. 15.

⁹⁴ p. 30.

⁹⁵ p. 34.

⁹⁶ Dr Stanislava Otašević, Autonomous Women's Center, Health Program, Belgrade, presentation at Consultation on 'Children, Small Arms and Education', Belgrade, 26 June, 2006. For the WHO study see: http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/summary_report/summary_report_English2.pdf, accessed 05 September 2006.

⁹⁷ 'The Balkan Piedmont: Male Suicide Rates Pre-war, Wartime, and Post-war in Serbia and Montenegro.' Selakovic-Bursic S, Haramic E, Leenaars AA. *Arch Suicide Res* 2006; 10(3): 225-38. <http://www.safetylit.org/week/2006/060619.pdf#search=%22the%20balkan%20piedmont%20%2B%20suicide%20in%20serbia%22> accessed 19 June 2006, abstract only. Anyone interested in the situation in Serbia and Montenegro should access the full article.



- The survey was conducted at the end of the school year, when many students were preoccupied with final exams (609 of the 1,421 were aged 18 or 19 years, so presumably many of them were in their final year).⁹⁸

A study conducted in Serbia and Montenegro reviewed suicides from 1989 to 2003. It found that the number of suicides increased during the conflict, peaking in 1993, with a rate of 29 per 100,000 in Serbia. The method of suicide changed during and after the conflict: the number using weapons doubled. The ratio of male to female suicides was two to one. Clearly a suicide in the family has a serious impact on the children.⁹⁹

Box 11: Summary of impact of small arms on children and young people in SEE

- There is an overall lack of data relating to the number of children and young people involved in small arms abuse (homicides, suicides, injuries) and accidents, either as victims or perpetrators.
- The available data support the global picture, that young males, 15 to 29 are overwhelmingly represented as victims and perpetrators, but it is not clear how many 15-18 year olds are involved.
- Domestic violence, which clearly has an impact on children and young people, is under-reported and given insufficient attention by authorities.
- People who attempt suicide using firearms are more likely to be successful; a suicide in the family has profound effects on children and young people.
- There is no evidence of firearms problems in schools.
- There is no evidence of specific juvenile crime related to firearms use.
- There is little or no data available on the attitudes of children and young people to firearms.
- Children have a right to feel safe, so the lack of data on children's experience of the excess of small arms in SEE is a deficiency.
- The confusion in adults' attitudes to small arms and security suggest that even if the issue of the role of small arms in society were addressed in schools, it is unlikely that teachers would be able to deal with the issue coherently.

It is a matter of some concern that small projects on 'small arms risk education' have been funded and implemented in schools, without any review of the research data on risk-taking and children. Some very simplistic assumptions have been made:

- There are too many weapons in the countries of SEE, therefore children are at risk;
- Children and young people do not know that weapons are dangerous;
- Therefore there should be education programmes about guns;
- Information given to children about the dangers of weapons will automatically translate into safe behaviour; and
- Children are isolated individuals who are able to change their behaviour as a result of new information, irrespective of the attitudes and values of society (parents, teachers, the community, the media).

⁹⁸ *Small arms problems in Belgrade – a survey of young people's knowledge and attitudes*, SEESAC 2003 <http://www.seesac.org/reports/BYU%20report.pdf> pp.7-8 Note: the poor quality of some surveys conducted by NGOs reflects their lack of capacity to conduct professional surveys (hardly surprising) and donors' desires to collect information quickly. The relationship between donors and local NGOs working on small arms issues is generally not a happy one.

⁹⁹ Selakovic-Bursic S, Haramic E, Leenaars AA 'The Balkan Piedmont: Male Suicide Rates Pre-war, Wartime, and Post-war in Serbia and Montenegro'. *Arch Suicide Res* 2006; 10(3): 225-38. <http://www.safetylit.org/week/2006/060619.pdf>, accessed 19 June 2006.



5 Risk-Taking Programmes

Part of the education consultancy included a *Literature Review on Children and Risk-Taking: Implications for Education and Small Arms*.¹⁰⁰ First it is necessary to define risk-taking:

"Risk-taking as an experience of human behaviour can be defined as an action with an unclear outcome; it is an action with a chance of loss or negative outcome".¹⁰¹

This definition is very broad, and includes some behaviours, which are not dangerous. It is important to include behaviours which the person performing them may not consider risky, but which can have negative consequences.¹⁰² For example, a child playing with a gun may not consider this dangerous as he/she may have seen people doing this on TV, or even an adult known to them, but clearly it is potentially dangerous. The context of the behaviour must also be taken into consideration when assessing risk-taking. For example, a boy who has been taught how to look after a hunting rifle by his father or other male relative may consider that he is skilled (and may in fact be skilled) in using the rifle safely.

The results of the review of research indicate the following:

- There is relatively little research on risk-taking and children.
- Some research has been conducted on adolescents and risk-taking, mostly in the USA.
- Risk-taking and reducing risk-taking are very complex issues.
- It cannot be assumed that the number of weapons in civilian hands automatically means children and young people are at high risk.
- The concept of risk is very complex, and very little research has been done on children, young people and risk. In relation to children, adults' perceptions of the risk of having firearms in the house is crucial to questions of the impact of small arms on children.
- It is generally accepted that people are resistant to the idea that they are at risk from any particular hazard, as they see themselves as less at risk than the 'average' person, at least in regard to health risks. Most people consider themselves to be better drivers than the average, and feel that they are less likely to get cancer than others. There is a sense of unreal optimism, or even of infallibility. The data from SALW Surveys in the region suggest that many men who keep guns at home give security as their main reason. It is highly likely that they have not considered any possible risk to their own or visiting children, or perceive it as a lesser risk. Women, in contrast, are much more likely to see the presence of guns in the community and in homes as a threat.
- The perception of risk is strongly influenced by cultural, social and gender factors. Friends, family and the wider community, can transmit perception of risk or individuals can form a view based on reasoning.¹⁰³ People who feel safe and have some knowledge about the particular risk are more able to change or modify their behaviour (for example, handing in a weapon, or storing the weapon safely) than those who are defensive.

¹⁰⁰ *Literature Review on Children and Risk-Taking: Implications for Education on Small Arms*, will shortly be available to download from <http://www.seesac.org/education>.

¹⁰¹ Buckley, Lisa Adolescents' perspective of transport related risk-taking and injury: Definitions, consequences, and risk and protective factors. http://www.carrsq.qut.edu.au/documents/publication_026.pdf, accessed 16 May 2006.

¹⁰² p. 368.

¹⁰³ *ibid*, p. 1.



The following model of risk assessment is instructive:



Figure 6: Diagram of how people estimate risk ¹⁰⁴

It is interesting to speculate on the risk assessment made by gun owners in SEE. They may feel the risks of having guns and other weapons in the house is voluntary, not to be feared (but for protection), known, controllable by them, in the hands of a reliable source, and managed in a responsible way, therefore underestimating the risk to themselves of using the weapon in domestic violence, committing suicide and the risk to other family members and visiting children, thus showing optimistic bias.

5.1 'SALW Risk Education'

'SALW Risk Education has been defined in the following way:

*"SALW Risk Education is a process that promotes the adoption of safer behaviours by at-risk groups and by SALW-holders by informing people of the dangers and threats of SALW and educating them about alternatives and safer behaviours".*¹⁰⁵

This may well be a useful approach to take with adult gun users, but there is no evidence that such an approach is appropriate for children and young people.

¹⁰⁴ See http://www.cepis.ops-oms.org/tutorial6/i/pdf/topic_04.pdf, accessed 26 May 2006. The website of the Pan-American Health Organization, the Regional Office of the World Health Organization, has an excellent online course on Risk, including a Powerpoint presentation – highly recommended.

¹⁰⁵ As defined in the SALW Awareness Support Pack, 2006 <http://www.seesac.org/reports/SASP%202%20handbook.pdf>, accessed 18 November 2006.

5.2 Safety programmes

In SEE the main response to protection of children from the risks of guns in homes has been weapons collection programmes (sometimes appealing to gun owners to protect children), stricter requirements for registration of legal guns, and education programmes, mostly targeting children rather than gun owners.

5.2.1 Methods of Protecting Children

A range of methods have been tried to protect children and young people from the negative effects of access to firearms in the home. All of this research is from the USA, as it has the highest rates of gun ownership of any country in the developed world.

5.2.2 Safe Storage

The most recent study on the effects of safe storage campaigns in the USA reports the following:



Fig 1. Example of a safe-storage campaign poster.

Picture 4: Example of a US campaign for safe storage practices

- More people in the USA support safe storage practices than attempts to reduce the number of guns in homes.
- The well-established finding that there are higher rates of gun-related homicide and suicide in households with guns also seems to be related to access to guns which are not stored and are loaded.
- Suicides of young people and unintentional injury (accidents) during unsupervised play are more likely in homes of family and friends with unsafely stored and loaded weapons.
- More than one in three US households own guns, and in half of the households with handguns there are also children: these households are more likely to store guns safely.

- However, 6-14% of these households keep a gun unlocked and unloaded, and from one to two thirds keep a gun either unloaded or unlocked.¹⁰⁶
- The US experience shows that formal gun safety training and safety counselling by health professionals have generally failed to change the behaviour of owning guns or storing them safely.
- Community events to change attitudes and behaviours are resource intensive, and may only reach those ready to make changes.
- This study focused on a broad-based public education campaign promoting safe gun storage in one state, involving raising awareness and providing economic incentives
- The campaign used the slogan: 'Buy a Box for Your Gun, not Your Kid'.
- There were also a range of education materials for adults on the characteristics of children (curiosity) and the ineffectiveness of child gun safety programmes.

¹⁰⁶ Emphasis added.



- The campaign was implemented from 1997 to 2001.¹⁰⁷
- The results of an evaluation showed that there was no statistically significant increase in safe storage practices.¹⁰⁸

5.2.3 Gun Safety Education for Adults

US research suggests that many gun owners who are also parents (fathers) do not engage in safe storage practices. Coyne-Beasley and colleagues found that parents who were safety conscious in relation to poisons and use of child restraints in vehicles, did not follow safe gun storage practices: of the 56% of parents surveyed who had a handgun in the house, 27% left it unlocked, 20% loaded and 7% both locked and unloaded.¹⁰⁹ There is no research data from SEE on storage practices of gun owners, nor have awareness campaigns targeted this issue, as the focus has been on weapons collection and registration.

5.2.4 Child Access Protection (CAP) Laws

CAP laws are a US approach to their serious problem of gun-related deaths and injuries. “*‘Child Access Prevention’ (CAP) laws, often referred to as ‘Safe Storage’ or ‘gun owner responsibility’ laws, generally require adults to either store loaded guns in a place that is reasonably inaccessible to children, or use a device to lock the gun. If a child obtains an improperly stored, loaded gun, the adult owner is criminally liable’*”.¹¹⁰

The main purpose of CAP laws is to contribute to prevention of unintentional injury, but they also contribute to the reduction of juvenile suicides and homicides. The Brady Campaign, which is one of the main organisations, which has lobbied for these laws cites a number of independent studies that indicate the effectiveness of these laws. One study in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 1997 found that CAP laws had resulted in the reduction of unintentional firearms deaths of children by 23%. The laws were particularly effective in protecting children below ten.¹¹¹

5.2.5 Education Programmes for Children and Youth

It will be argued that there are a range of education programmes already being implemented which are relevant to the issue of small arms and children – learning to solve problems and conflicts peacefully, peace education, human rights education, schools as zones of peace, schools without violence – so that there is no need for a special programme addressing small arms. In particular, it will be demonstrated that there is no educational and developmental validity to the concepts of ‘gun safety’ education and ‘small arms risk education’.

As part of this SALW Education work, the relevant literature on ‘gun safety’ education programmes for children and other practices such as safe storage was reviewed. The document *Review of Literature on ‘Gun Safety’ Education* will be placed in the education section of the SEESAC website, and will be widely distributed.

¹⁰⁷ Elanor A. Sidman, David C. Grossman, Thomas D. Koepsell, Luann D’Ambrosio, John Britt, Evan S. Simpson, Frederick P. Rivara and Abraham B. Bergman ‘Evaluation of a Community-Based Handgun Safe-Storage Campaign’ *Pediatrics* 2005;115;654-661, DOI: 10.1542/peds.2004-1625 pp. 2 - 3. <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/115/6/e654>, accessed 31 August 2006.

¹⁰⁸ p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ The Association of Handgun Ownership and Storage Practices with Safety Consciousness, Tamera Coyne-Beasley, Kara S. McGee, Renee M Johnson, W. Clayton Bordley, <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/156/8/763>, accessed 07 March 2006.

¹¹⁰ In 1989, Florida became the first state to pass a CAP law because of increasing gun fatalities among children. Under the Florida law (§784.05), it is a crime to store or leave a loaded firearm within the reach or easy access of a minor, defined as persons under the age of 16 (other states now apply the law to anyone who leaves a gun accessible to a child under 18). The Florida law only applies if the minor gains access to a gun that was not stored securely. The law does not apply if the firearm is stored in a locked box, secured with an effective child-safety lock, or obtained by a minor through unlawful entry. The gun owner’s penalty for unlawful access by a minor is a misdemeanour unless the minor injures himself or someone else, in which case the penalty is a felony. Gun dealers are required to provide purchasers with a written warning about the law, and to place a warning sign at the counter. Now 19 states have CAP laws. <http://www.bradycampaign.org/facts/faqs/?page=cap>, accessed 01 May 2006.

¹¹¹ Cummings P, Grossman, DC, et al. ‘State Gun Safe Storage Laws and Child Mortality Due to Firearms.’ *JAMA*. 1997; 278:1084, <http://www.bradycampaign.org/facts/faqs/?page=cap>, accessed 17 May 2006.



As already noted in the section on 'risk-taking', education programmes attempting to change children's behaviour in regard to risk are unlikely to be successful. A recent report in the field of health education, a long established means of trying to educate against health risks, casts doubt on its effectiveness. In the UK the Advisory Council on Drugs has called for controls such as raising duty on alcohol, reducing the drink-drive limit for young drivers and increasing the legal smoking age to 18 years (from 16 years) as a result of increasing abuse of alcohol, drugs and smoking by young people.¹¹²

Box 12: Success of Health Education programmes

Having reviewed research from across the world on health education programmes on the risk of drug use, excessive use of alcohol and smoking, the committee of doctors and scientists concluded that the success of school-based schemes was 'slight or non-existent' and could even be 'counter-productive'.

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/5344310.stm, accessed 14 September 2006

5.2.6 Safety Education: 'Risk Education' and 'Gun Safety' Programmes

There is no evidence to support the introduction of 'gun safety' education programmes in schools, nor for the concept of 'small arms risk education'. The USA is the only country where there are programmes related to 'gun safety' for preschool (4 - 5 years), elementary and secondary school students. Research conducted by pediatricians and psychologists has found no evidence of the effectiveness of these programmes, many of which are based on the NRA (National Rifle Association) model.

The concepts of 'gun safety' education and 'small arms risk education' are not based on knowledge of child development. Knowledge from child development makes it clear that such programmes are inappropriate and unlikely to succeed, as young children do not have the cognitive maturity to make the necessary decisions and adolescents frequently see themselves as invulnerable to danger and harm, especially boys, who are the main group at risk of playing with guns and using them inappropriately.

Himle and colleagues assessed the NRA model (Eddie Eagle) and a behavioural skills programmes designed for pre-school children. Both programmes succeeded in the short term in teaching children safety messages, but neither resulted in changes in behaviour in real situations.¹¹³ Another study by Hardy showed that young children given information about the dangers of guns showed no differences in their play with guns before and a week after the intervention. There was a correlation between access to parents' guns¹¹⁴ in the home, gunplay in the

¹¹² 'Pathways to Problems: Hazardous use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs by young people in the UK and its implications for policy' Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, September 2006.

'Illegal or other drugs. A number of systematic reviews have found that some skills-based drugs education programmes in schools had limited effectiveness in preventing substance use in the short term, but there was no evidence of long-term impact. It has not yet been possible to identify the components of skills-based programmes that are necessary for effectiveness.' p. 73.

'Given the findings of the reviews summarised above [on drug education in schools], there is clearly a mismatch between what is practised in the US and what is known about the ineffectiveness of drugs education in schools. This is also likely to be the case in other countries. For example, there is a consensus in reviews of DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), a social influence programme in which resistance skills are taught by uniformed police officers in the classroom, that it has been proven to be ineffective. Yet this intervention has been reported to be delivered in the majority of American schools.' p. 76.

'Preliminary conclusions from the study [of drugs education in UK schools] are that most schools used methods that have not been found to be effective and many used out-of-date materials. Teachers were often unaware of alternatives or did not have the confidence to try them. A large proportion of those providing the teaching – either teachers themselves or outside agents – had not had appropriate training in the past three years. There was considerable duplication of content within schools and between primary and secondary schools. Many pupils were critical of drugs education, finding it uninspiring and unrelated to their own experience.' p. 78. '... the evaluations of current practice in England and Scotland indicate wide variations in standards, with many schools using traditional, information-based methods that are least likely to be effective. Despite this, drugs education policy in the UK continues to be based on the assumption that drugs education is effective, investing large amounts of staff and pupil time and resources in such activity.' p. 80. Notwithstanding these comments, the Committee still sees an important role for schools in drug education. <http://www.drugs.gov.uk/publication-search/acmd/pathways-to-problems/Pathwaystoproblems.pdf?view=Binary>, accessed 14 September 2006.

¹¹³ Micah B. Himle, Raymond G. Miltenberger, Brian J. Gatheridge and Christopher A. Flessner, 'An Evaluation of Two Procedures for Training Skills to Prevent Gun Play in Children', *Pediatrics*, 2004;113:70-77, <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/113/1/70>, accessed 07 March 2006.

¹¹⁴ Much of the research on children and guns is gender blind in the sense that the term 'parents' is often used when in reality fathers are meant, since very few women are gun owners. This point should be particularly borne in mind in discussions in SEE, where the vast majority of gun owners are men.



play room, and aggressive play.¹¹⁵ In a famous study Jackman and colleagues placed boys (8 - 12 years) in a room where two water pistols and a real gun were hidden. The results showed that 72% of the groups found the handgun and 76% handled it, including firing the gun. Half of the boys who found the gun were unsure if it was a toy or real. Parental estimates of their son's interest in guns did not predict their behaviour: boys who were believed to have a low interest in guns were just as likely to handle the handgun or pull the trigger as others perceived to have a high interest.¹¹⁶

Box 13: In lab test, boys find hidden gun and pull trigger

In a disturbing laboratory experiment in which a gun was hidden in a drawer, many boys found the weapon, played with it and even pulled the trigger without knowing whether it was loaded. 'They did everything from point it at each other to look down the barrel themselves,' said Dr. Geoffrey Jackman, who led the study. 'The scariest thing is when the children picked up that gun and looked straight down the barrel.'

Source: <http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2001-06-04-boys-guns.htm>, accessed 17 March 2006

The injury prevention approach requires that the first line of protection from the risk of guns must be the safest, that is, the physical separation of the gun from the child. Another problem with education programmes for children is that they give parents a sense of complacency (they believe that the child has the necessary information and the skills to protect themselves) without altering the child's behaviour. In this sense, such programmes have unintended negative consequences. Many injury prevention programmes also include an education component, but in the case of risk from guns, there is no evidence that the programmes work.¹¹⁷

Box 14: Professional Views on Protecting Children from Guns

Adolescent Health Committee, Canadian Pediatric Society (2005)

'Injury prevention educational programs may have unintended effects. It is possible that firearm safety education for children may increase their comfort level around guns, particularly in programs that include gun-handling techniques. Parents may be inclined to reduce their supervision or use of safe storage practices if their children learn gun safety at school. At present, no children's firearm safety programs have been shown to be effective in simulated real-life situations. Further research is required to find an effective way to change children's behaviour around firearms. Widespread use of these programs is unwise until an effective program is developed.'

Source: *Youth and Firearms in Canada*, Adolescent Health Committee, Canadian Pediatric Society, <http://www.cps.ca/english/statements/AM/Ah0.htm>, accessed 14 August 2006

American Academy of Pediatrics

The single most important step is to keep guns away from children. The safest thing for your family is not to keep a gun in the home. But, if you keep a gun at home, unload it and lock it away. Separate the ammunition. A gun in the home significantly increases risks for suicide, domestic homicide and accidents.

Source: *Guns and Children*, American Academy of Pediatrics, <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/childhealthmonth/Guns.htm>, accessed 07 March 2006

American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Injury and Poison Prevention

For developmental reasons, educational interventions are unlikely to be effective for many children and adolescents.

Source: *Firearm-Related Injuries Affecting the Pediatric Population* *Pediatrics* 2000;105:888-895 DOI: 10.1542/peds.105.4.888 <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/105/4/888>, accessed 14 March 2006

¹¹⁵ Teaching firearm safety to children: failure of a program, Hardy MS, *J Dev Behav Pediatr.* 2002 Apr;23(2):71-, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=11943968&dopt=Abstract, accessed 06 March 2006.

¹¹⁶ Seeing Is Believing: What Do Boys Do When They Find a Real Gun? Geoffrey A. Jackman, Mirna M. Farah, Arthur L. Kellermann and Harold K. Simon, *Pediatrics* 2001;107:1247-1250 DOI: 10.1542/peds.107.6.1247, <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/107/6/1247>, accessed 06 March 2006.

¹¹⁷ Firearm Injury Prevention: Failure of Gun-Safety Education, M. Denise Dowd, Robert Sege, Gary A. Smith, Joseph L. Wright and Raymond G. Miltenberger, *Pediatrics* 2004;113:1847-1848 DOI: 10.1542/peds.113.6.1847, <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/113/6/1847>, accessed 07 March 2006.



5.2.7 A Summary of research on 'gun safety' education programmes for children

- Children and young people are particularly difficult targets for behavioural change programmes.
- Young children are cognitively immature and in elementary school have difficulty in making probability judgements such as, 'How likely is it that I will get hurt?' They have difficulty identifying hazardous situations, and when they do, they react slowly. They also have difficulty responding to complex and changing situations. Very young children have difficulty in making the causal connections necessary to decide if a situation or object is safe or unsafe.
- Responsibility for the safety of young children rests with adults (parents, teachers and caregivers), the community and governments. It is unreasonable and a violation of children's rights to protection to expect them to take responsibility for protecting themselves against dangers such as guns in the home.
- Adolescents: there is considerable evidence that many adolescents perceive themselves as invulnerable. While they are more able to identify dangerous situations, they may underestimate the danger to themselves and fail to take precautions. For example, children who handle a firearm once without accident or injury may perceive the activity as safe and themselves unlikely to be injured. Older children, especially boys, may experience peer pressure to experiment and seek danger. Older children are also less likely to want to follow rules and seek adult approval; rather they want to experiment and push the limits.
- Relationship between information and behaviour: there is little evidence to support the idea that children can translate information from education programmes into safe behaviour. Children are unable to hypothesize about new situations, or situations only experienced in the classroom or other artificial settings.
- Children and young people are curious and it is natural for them to explore and try out new behaviours.
- There is little evidence that girls are interested in guns or likely to use them if they find them at home, whereas, there is strong evidence that boys are interested, if not fascinated. This interest is fuelled by the media (films, TV, video and computer games).



6 Small Arms Education in South Eastern Europe

6.1 Education as Context

A hidden assumption in many proposals to create curricula on particular topics is that schools either provide a positive environment for children or at the very least, a neutral environment, so that the outcomes intended by curriculum developers and program funders will automatically be what they envisage.¹¹⁸ This is a naïve and simplistic view, which ignores the reality that schools are complex and chaotic systems embedded in complex societies, which are in turn increasingly affected by globalisation (external donors and international organisations surely qualify as agents of globalisation). Without entering into the complexities of this topic, something must be said about the potential of schools, particularly in post-conflict societies, to contribute to war and peace.

There is a new trend in education to assess the role of schooling in contributing to conflict and to peace. Many attempts to introduce peace education, civic education and human rights education in post-conflict societies can be seen as naïve and superficial, in that they sometimes simply add a course in such themes, without examining more broadly the structures of education, such as the teaching of 'defence' studies in former Yugoslavia, authoritarian relationships, violence within the school and rigid curricula based on facts.¹¹⁹

Peace and conflict resolution education are possible school-based responses to the issue of excess small arms in societies and their multiple impacts. However, schools are integral parts of society, and can function to increase the level of negative or positive conflict in a society. Neither are givens, but each education system needs to be analysed for its role. Professor Lynn Davies of Birmingham University has developed a typology of how schools teach peace or war:



Figure 7: Typology of how war and peace are taught in schools¹²⁰

She points out that the 'defence curriculum' presents conflict as a constant threat and teaches students how to use weapons. The influence of this curriculum in SEE until its cessation in the 1990s should not be underestimated.

¹¹⁸ See the definition of the 'hidden curriculum' in the glossary.

¹¹⁹ This has been addressed by the Secretary-General's Study on Violence, and the subsequent programmes on 'Schools without Violence' in Serbia and Montenegro, for example. The teaching of Defence Studies has been discontinued in SEE, but when mention is made of 'small arms education' some people immediately suggest that former Defence Studies teachers should teach this topic, as it is assumed that they are technically competent, and other teachers are not. A Security Studies Curriculum has been developed and piloted in Serbia, adapted from a university level course, but there is insufficient funding to continue. This may be a happy accident, as the curriculum is very didactic and overloaded with information.

¹²⁰ <http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/EducationSupplement/07.pdf>, accessed 30 September 2006.



The countries of SEE are in varying stages of educational reform, with initiatives by UNICEF and INGOs on 'active learning', 'child-centred learning', 'child friendly schools', critical thinking,¹²¹ and the introduction of Parents' Councils as well as new subjects such as Civic Education and Human Rights Education.¹²² ICRC's course on 'Exploring Humanitarian Law' can also be included in this category of attempts to reform and democratise schools and the curriculum. There are also attempts to change History syllabi, a very complex issue and process. One important issue that is consistently ignored in attempts to add topics and subjects to schools in the region is the role and status of teachers. Teachers are generally poorly paid, and as a result feel that they are not respected as professionals. Few bright young people plan to make teaching a career. Imagine the impact on teachers of international organisations constantly funding short-term programmes, offering opportunities for some teachers to have in-service teacher education, but not all, with projects involving the handing out of T-shirts, for example, when some schools lack adequate toilet facilities, libraries, science laboratories and sports equipment.

There have been some programmes on small arms in schools in the region, mostly funded by UNDP and UNICEF. These programmes have tended to be stand-alone programmes (with the exception of the planned programmes in Albania and BiH), short term, out of context, and without proper evaluation.

Considering that the former Yugoslavia had a subject called 'Defence Studies' in secondary schools, where students learned how to use weapons, it is even more crucial that 'small arms education' not be introduced into schools, as it is likely that it will be framed as a topic requiring technical knowledge, and teachers who formerly taught Defence Studies will be seen as the appropriate teachers to deliver the topic.

6.2 Albania

There have been several small programmes addressing small arms with children, and currently UNICEF and the Ministry of Education have a manual on safety education which will be included in the school curriculum as soon as funding is available.

Balkan Sunflowers implemented a programme in Albania in 2000. It was implemented in several cities, and used art, video, photography and theatre to look at the impact of weapons and unexploded ordnance in the environment. The programme was funded by UNICEF and the manual and evaluation are available on the BSF website.¹²³ The programme was very child-centred and interactive, but there was no long-term evaluation to assess whether there were any changes in attitudes among the children who participated. This is an example of single projects funded once and not followed up or replicated. The quality of the material and teaching methodology is superior to that of other 'small arms education' interventions in the region.

The Albania Centre for Peace and Disarmament has been involved in peace and disarmament activities but do not have any current activities due to lack of funding. They implemented a peace education project in schools in 2004, part of a broader project supported by the Department of Disarmament Affairs and the Hague Appeal for Peace. The manual has been partly translated into English and is available on their website, along with the complete Albanian version. The Centre has donated 500 copies of their book 'Learning to Abolish War' to the Ministry of Education, which has recommended it for schools.¹²⁴ The centre conducted a survey of teachers and students in 2004 and found that 90% of students and 92% of teachers were against gun ownership. Several attempts to contact the NGO, both by email and trying to arrange a visit in Tirana proved unsuccessful.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Mostly sponsored by the Soros Foundation and its local organisations.

¹²² Civic Education and Human Rights Education have been supported by a variety of external actors: OSCE, the Soros Foundation, the Council of Europe.

¹²³ http://www.balkansunflowers.org/upload_files/MAWA.pdf, accessed 07 March 2006.

¹²⁴ http://www.cpde.net/downloads/teachers_manual-en.php, accessed 14 March 2006. The manual was developed with the support of the Hague Appeal for Peace, and is excellent. It covers the following topics: Human security and disarmament; Human Rights Law and institutions; Education for peace and conflict resolution; Education for peace and disarmament in the school; Inclusion of peace education in the curricula; Methodology of peace education in the schools; Trainers of peace education; Practical Activities; Practical Activities organized by teachers; Bibliography.

¹²⁵ http://www.cpde.net/articles/project_evaluation-en.php, accessed 14 March 2006.



UNDP funded a schools project in 2003. The aim was to initiate an 'awareness education' programme in schools with police officers, with the initial aim of having an impact on the weapons surrender process, but then to shift to a broader safety and security agenda. The programme was implemented by two local NGOs, with the Directorate of Police, which would send a police officer to work with the NGO in each school, and then continue working with schools. The project covered traffic rules (6 - 10 years), drug problems (11 - 15 years) and drugs, prostitution and trafficking (15 - 18 years). The Final Report comments that this project usually takes two years, but it was implemented as a two-month pilot project in four schools, focusing on security and safety rules and 'special demonstrations showing how to avoid misuse of weapons, ammunitions and explosives'.¹²⁶ The police were also involved in the project. The project targeted 820 elementary pupils in Shkodra and 920 in Tirana and 228 secondary students in Shkodra and 250 in Tirana.

The implementing NGOs experienced a number of difficulties with the project: the teachers were concerned that the curriculum was full, and there was no space for additional activities; it was difficult to convince school directors to make time for the project; there was no time to monitor the impact on pupils as the project was implemented at the end of the school year; it was the exam period for the secondary students (grade 4, final year of school) and they had difficulty focussing and concentrating; teachers were not involved voluntarily and indicated their unwillingness to be involved without being paid (the police made similar comments).¹²⁷ There was no evaluation, but the project was believed to have improved the relationship between school pupils and police. It must be said that this sounds like an education horror story, reflecting a lack of understanding of how education functions (even to being unaware of the fact that final year students have exams!), and a lack of consultation with teachers and school directors to the extent that it appears that the whole project was an external imposition. Subsequently this programme was extended to over 100 schools, involving 130,000 children, with police entering classrooms to teach children about the dangers of weapons, and about drugs, prostitution, human trafficking, alcohol and tobacco use and traffic rules.¹²⁸ No evaluation of this project is available.

The Security Sector Reform programmes being implemented by UNDP have had a number of art competitions in school. While these types of programmes are popular with non-educators, they are of very doubtful value and effectiveness to young people.¹²⁹ What evidence is there that painting pictures such as the following has any value in reducing boys' interest in guns and violence?



Picture 5: Painting by a School Child in an Awareness Education programme as part of the Support to Security Sector Reform programme, UNDP SSSR, Albania (Copyright UNDP Albania)



Picture 5: Painting by a School Child in an Awareness Education programme as part of the Support to Security Sector Reform programme, UNDP SSSR, Albania (Copyright UNDP Albania)

UNICEF Albania has supported the Ministry of Education to develop a manual for primary schools on safety education, including mines, small arms, fireworks and first aid. The plan is that lessons will be delivered on the

¹²⁶ UNDP Support to Security Sector Reform, 'Final Report on the Implementation of the Project 'Disarmament Education and Peaceful Culture', 'Movement for Disarmament' and 'Safer Albania', Tirana, July 2003. Internal document. pp. 11 - 12.

¹²⁷ *Op cit* p. 21.

¹²⁸ Email communication from Mr Lawrence Doczy, Project Manager, UNDP Albania, 23 November 2006.

¹²⁹ It was not possible to contact the two NGOs in Albania that have been involved in small arms education, except for email contact with Elton Skendaj, of Albania Centre for Peace and Disarmament who is now studying full-time and not involved in peace education in Albania.



'class period', a weekly session with the class teacher when a range of issues are dealt with relevant to pupils' welfare. The teacher will decide which lessons to offer, based on the needs of pupils: for example, the lesson on mines will not be offered in mine-free areas and teachers can schedule the lesson on fireworks before New Year celebrations, for example. This flexibility is an excellent feature of this planned project, as it respects teacher's judgments, and does not waste pupils' time through delivering standardized curricula irrespective of need. The relevant sections (the children's rights rationale and the material on small arms) were translated into English as part of the Education Consultancy, and are on the SEESAC website as examples for others to review. At present there is no funding to print the manual, so it is not clear when this programme will be implemented in schools. Nor is there any indication of whether there will be funding for a comprehensive evaluation.¹³⁰ Discussions with the Ministry of Education indicated that this material was seen as sufficient for the needs of children and there was therefore no necessity for any other educational interventions. However, based on the review of literature on risk-taking and children and safety education, doubts about the validity of the exercise remain.

6.3 Bosnia and Herzegovina

There have been a number of small programmes in schools on small arms, and Handicap International has included material on small arms in their Mine Risk Education programme, which will be included in the school curriculum through the weekly lesson. Mine risk education had previously been included in the curriculum, but it was not being implemented, due to a lack of monitoring and difficulties teachers faced in developing materials.

Handicap International did a survey of children's access to weapons before deciding to include small arms material in the mine risk curriculum. There was a highly significant difference in answers between boys and girls, and a disturbing number of children who stated that they had held a weapon when under the supervision of adults, from 27 to 38% of boys and 8 to 10% of girls. Clearly there is a need for education of parents about gun safety, and attitudes to guns. However, the decision was made to develop a school curriculum, rather than address adults. Mr Danijel Hopic, the Project Manager for the SALWRE curriculum stated that it was very difficult to change adults' attitudes, and therefore a long-term approach to education for children was indicated. He hopes that parents will be influenced by their children.¹³¹

The curriculum has been developed in cooperation with the Ministries of Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (13 Ministries for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federal Ministry of Education, the Department of Education for Brcko District and the Ministry of Education for Republika Srpska). The curriculum has been printed as one manual for teachers, but classes will be delivered separately, one class for MRE, one for small arms. Secondary students will receive more lessons on small arms than primary students, and teachers will decide how many lessons to give based on the level of risk.¹³²

SALW RE will be implemented through community classes 2-6 classes per year (depending on the level of mine risk). The approach is interdisciplinary; there will be extra classes, parent meetings, and follow-up with audio-visual materials.¹³³ All activities in the curriculum have been field-tested and adapted, based on the results. The original plan was to have all materials printed, in order to make the curriculum available to schools from September 2006. However, there were delays in printing, due to some issues raised by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre. The audiovisual materials are ready, but the printed materials will not be available this school semester. It is likely, therefore, that the curriculum will not be implemented this school year, although some schools may choose to begin in the second semester. The monitoring and evaluation will also be delayed.¹³⁴

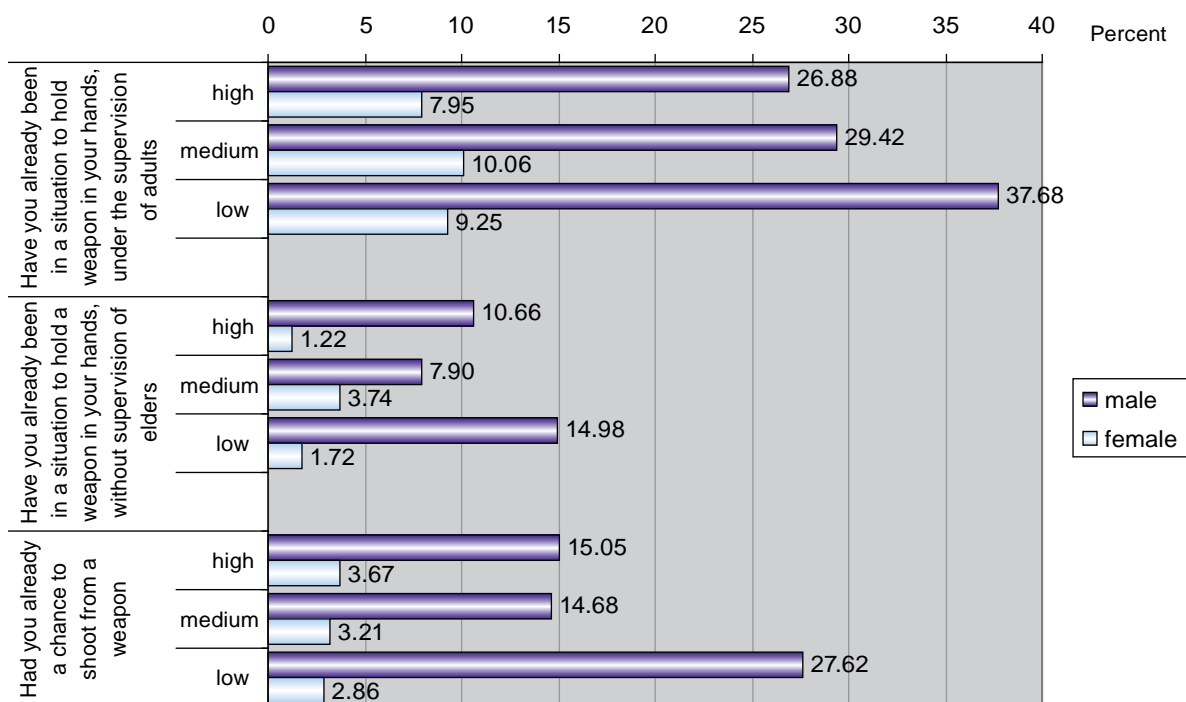
¹³⁰ Thanks to Dr Aurora Bushati, UNICEF, Albania, for this information. The views are my own.

¹³¹ Personal communication, 28 June 2006. Although my views differ from those of the Project manager for this curriculum, I would like to pay tribute to the extraordinary achievement of gaining cooperation from such a large number of education bodies.

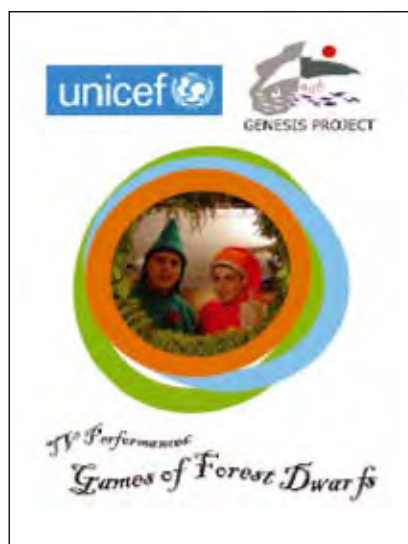
¹³² http://www.seesac.org/newsletter/Newsletter_December_2005.pdf p.10, accessed 10 May 2006.

¹³³ Presentation at Consultation on Children and Small Arms, Belgrade, 29 June 2006. Mr Hopic was invited to the Consultation at the request of educators in Serbia, as they wished to know about programmes in other countries of the region.

¹³⁴ Suzana Srnic Vukovic, MRE Coordinator for Educational Sector, Handicap International Sarajevo, email communication, 03 November 2006.



Graph 1: The number of children answering questions about access to small arms, related to level of mine risk in their area



Picture 7: GENESIS/UNICEF puppet film for children on safety (mines and small arms)

In response to the results of Handicap International's survey of children, UNDP Bosnia implemented an art competition for secondary students to develop a poster and slogan for future SALW Awareness campaigns. The competition was conducted over one month and cost US\$ 2,700.¹³⁵

UNICEF has funded a local NGO, GENESIS, to develop a puppet show that gives messages about land mines and small arms.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Internal UNDP document, 2005.

¹³⁶ Natalie Prevost, UNICEF Protection Officer kindly made the materials available, but it will not be possible to put all of them on the SEESAC website. For further information, contact nprevost@unicef.org or Dijana Pejic, program manager, GENESIS genesis@inecco.net; genesis@blic.net <http://www.genesis-bl.org/>.



6.4 Croatia

Croatia implemented an awareness programme in schools in the late 1990s, funded by UNICEF. The programme, was part of comprehensive community-based initiative and it is therefore impossible to know the results of the school-based programme.

Box 15: National strategy for raising awareness in children on the protection from explosive devices and firearms by 2005

On the basis of initial survey results and numerous activities both at the national and local level conducted by local and international stakeholders in the field of firearms and explosive devices risk prevention, a conference entitled "Conference on Children Protection from UXO" was held in Dubrovnik in 1995. The work of the Conference resulted in producing a "National Strategy of Raising Awareness in Children on the Protection from Firearms and Explosive ordnance by 2005". The conference was attended by the representatives of all municipalities who presented their own experiences from the recent past. The representatives of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the relevant ministries also attended the Conference: Ministry of Education and Sport, Interior, Defence, Health and Labour and Welfare as well as State Offices for War Victims and Refugees. Thus the issue was placed high on the political agenda. The conference emphasised the need for long-term solutions of the problem and for continuous health education. One of the aims of the Strategy was the production of an Awareness Support Pack for all the schools and pre-schools in Croatia. It was concluded that this subject matter should be included in the regular school depending on local needs.

A teaching pack was produced in the School of National Health, (funded by UNICEF) consisting of 10 parts:

1. Manual;
2. Right of children to be protected from war consequences and the Children's Rights Convention;
3. Weapons of Mass Destruction: types and characteristics, dangers and protection procedures;
4. Creative activities for promoting self-defence of children from destructive weapons;
- 5: Puzzle: Ivan tells a story;
6. Question game: 'Children, watch out!';
7. Video film 'Dangers from destructive weapons';
8. Posters;
9. Slides; and
10. Leaflets for children and parents.

The teaching pack was distributed to all the elementary schools in the Republic of Croatia, and its contents became a part of the regular school curriculum.

Source: 'Mjere smanjenja rizika od ozljeda oružjem i minsko-eksplozivnim sredstvima u Hrvatskoj od 1991. do 1995. godine' Article kindly supplied by Dr Ada Mujkic, of the Andrija Stampar School of Public Health. Translated by Aleksandra Dobric, UNDP SEESAC.

6.5 FYR Macedonia

Small activities with children have mostly been in the context of weapons collection programmes and now safer communities plans. Small arms risk education has been delivered to police, village heads, religious figures, medical staff, NGOs and in schools.¹³⁷ Alain Lapon, Project Manager, UNDP PCSS, has had a number of contacts with staff of the Ministry of Education, but they were unwilling to agree on a plan to introduce small arms education into schools. The Education Consultant met with ministry staff, but like others in the region, they commented that the school curriculum was overloaded. Following the work already done, an attempt was made to discuss introducing some lessons on the issue of guns in society in the subject: 'Peace, Tolerance and Protection', but it was not possible to obtain the permission of the Director of the Bureau for Education Development.

6.6 Kosovo

There have been a number of mini small arms education projects in Kosovo, and one major project funded by UNDP in 2006. In 2003 UNDP funded the international NGO War Child to run creative workshops for children 'trying to raise awareness against weapons'. The workshops for 200 children were followed by a parade in the main street of the city of Priština, with children carrying placards with messages against weapons, and toy guns that were

¹³⁷ http://www.seesac.org/newsletter/Newsletter_April_2006.pdf p.10, accessed 10 May 2006.



then destroyed with the aim of raising awareness of children and adults about the dangers of weapons.¹³⁸ No doubt this was great fun for the children involved, a relief from the rigours of learning mathematics and science, but one really must wonder about the rationale for such activities. Should we use children to raise awareness about an issue that is so clearly the problem of adults? Why do we target children first and not adults?

In 2005-6 UNDP funded a large and expensive project, initially for four months, but then extended for another six weeks. The staff of the NGO, police and teachers were trained on the technical aspects of SALW, using materiel downloaded from the SEESAC website. Four schools were chosen in four different municipalities: it is not clear what the criteria were for choosing the locations of the project. Police participated in the 'lectures' in schools. Fifteen thousand flyers and 1000 posters were produced and distributed. The leaflets contained articles from newspapers relevant to small arms and the following information:

- *"More than 500,000 people on average are killed with conventional arms every year – one person every minute!"*
- *There are 639 million small arms in the world or one for every 10 people!*
- *The arms trade is out of control. There is little time to lose – in the same minute in which one person dies from armed violence, 15 new arms are manufactured for sale".¹³⁹*



Pictures 8 and 9: Kosovo project on small arms education for children

In addition sports equipment was delivered to schools for the sporting aspect of the project, when students wore T-shirts with 'no guns' messages and played soccer.

Activities in schools involved art teachers, teachers of Albanian (students wrote about the issue) and sports teachers. No educational rationale is given for these activities, nor was there a needs analysis to support the targeting of school children. Materials were not pilot tested, as the time frame for the whole project was too short.¹⁴⁰ A short questionnaire was given to students immediately after the programme as an evaluation. It indicated that the majority of students remembered the messages.

¹³⁸ <http://www.worldchildkosova.com/en/raising.html>, accessed 23 March 2006 (World Child is the local NGO which developed from 'War Child'). My comments are not intended to be negatively critical, but to raise the issue of whether projects are in the best interests of the child, and also cost-effective, given the huge demands for services for children and young people in the region and the lack of funding.

¹³⁹ Translation of leaflet used by local NGO in the Kosovo education project.

¹⁴⁰ One unfortunate new development needs to be noted: it is now very easy to download educational materials from the Internet (and small arms materials targeting adults) and put them into a package to deliver quickly to groups of students. It goes without saying that this is not best practice in education. A particular danger is that materials developed by the National Rifle Association can thus be widely disseminated and used unthinkingly. (If you 'google' 'gun safety education' the NRA and the Eddie Eagle programme emerge in the top two or three sites).



While all concerned with this project were well intentioned and working for the good of children, there is no evidence to support this type of intervention, which was short-term, not based on a needs analysis, without an educational rationale, expensive, and without external evaluation or planned follow-up.¹⁴¹

6.7 Montenegro

There have been no formal education programmes on small arms in Montenegro. The Education Consultant observed a disturbing presentation by a member of the Ministry of the Interior, where a small arsenal of weapons was exhibited to students. This attempt was very well intentioned, but police and people with military training naturally focus on the technical details of weapons, and lack the skills to carry out an interactive discussion with young people.

6.8 Serbia

There has been no education about small arms in schools in Serbia. Some research has been done in schools in Belgrade about the attitudes of young people to small arms, as discussed in the Impact section, and the SASP (Small Arms Support Pack) material was tested in southern Serbia, although there is no evidence to suggest that such an approach is appropriate for children.

The conclusion of the Consultation on Education and Small Arms held in Belgrade in June 2006, was that there was no need or justification for such education in schools. This conclusion was strengthened by the fact that there are already programmes addressing violence in schools, the difficulties experienced in offering Civic Education in schools and the fact that the EHL programme has been piloted, but still awaits approval by the Ministry of Education for inclusion in the curriculum.

A number of people at the Consultation stressed the need for awareness raising programmes among parents and gun owners.

6.9 Other Relevant Education Programmes in the Region

6.9.1 Exploring Humanitarian Law (ICRC)¹⁴²

Box 16: Comment by a student in Serbia who attended a pilot EHL course

'This should be taught as widely as possible as soon as possible to adults in regular education, to the next generation, to the public in all countries of the world. IHL must be explored so that it becomes part of everybody's ethics.' (Serbia)

ICRC has developed a programme for schools on international humanitarian law, called 'Exploring Humanitarian Law'. It is clear from the following table that many of the concepts and skills covered in this programme are relevant to the learning of non-violent ways of resolving conflicts and dealing with the world. It is reasonable to assume that such education programmes would also have an impact on attitudes towards firearms.

¹⁴¹ Information obtained from UNDP staff in Kosovo, two interviews with NGO staff and project documents. I would like to put on record that I feel uncomfortable being so critical of this project, as the people I interviewed had clearly worked hard and were totally sincere in their efforts.

¹⁴² Thanks to Camilla Waszink and the Education staff of ICRC for their comments and corrections to this section.



IN ALL MODULES				
CONCEPTS	SKILLS			
Human dignity	Discussion	Perspective taking	Identifying consequences	Estimating scope
Obstacles to humanitarian behaviour	Listening	Role playing	Tracing consequences	Estimating effect
Dilemmas	Disagreeing respectfully	Story analysis	Problem analysis	Working in groups
Consequences	Supporting opinions with reasons	Story telling	Needs assessment	Planning
Multiple perspectives	Brainstorming	Dilemma analysis	Identifying solutions	Journal writing

Table 3: Course Matrix for EHL¹⁴³

The education programme has five modules, and introductory and concluding material:

- Introductory Exploration.
- Module 1: The Humanitarian Perspective.
- Module 2: Limits in Armed conflict.
- Module 3: The Law in Action.
- Module 4: Ensuring Justice.
- Module 5: Responding to the Consequences of War.
- Concluding Exploration.¹⁴⁴

There is a wide range of support material available for Ministries of Education and teachers, including 'Guidelines for Inserting EHL into the Curriculum' and 'Guidelines for Experimentation and Evaluation'.¹⁴⁵

There are four phases to the implementation of the programme:

- Phase 1: Introductory phase, Planning implementation strategy; Translating.
- Phase 2: Agreed strategy; Teacher training initiated; Preparing piloting in classroom or non-formal setting.
- Phase 3: Teacher training effected; Testing in school or non-formal setting on-going.
- Phase 4: EHL integrated into official school curricula.

PHASE	COUNTRY
1 Introductory	Albania
	UNMIK/PISG Kosovo
2 Agreed strategy	-
3 Teacher training effected; Testing ongoing	Bosnia and Herzegovina
	Croatia
	Montenegro
	Serbia
4 EHL integrated	FYR Macedonia

Table 4: Phases of Implementation of EHL Programmes in South Eastern Europe¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ [http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/educyouthehl/\\$File/EHL-course-matrix.pdf](http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/educyouthehl/$File/EHL-course-matrix.pdf), accessed 03 April 2006.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* accessed 03 April 2006.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* accessed 03 April 2006.

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList568/0880F9BD34E3036A41256F4E003C6D35>, accessed 03 April 2006.



The length of time involved in developing this programme, and attempting to include it in official school curricula, while possibly surprising to some, will provide no surprises to those with experience in education and curriculum development. Discussions with the Ministry of Education and Science and ICRC staff in Kosovo revealed the difficulties of introducing the programme there.¹⁴⁷ The programme has been successfully piloted, but it is not clear when it will be included in the curriculum due to a number of factors: difficulty of finding space in a crowded curriculum and lack of funding for teacher training. There is also the issue of teacher motivation to work with such programmes that demand much commitment and extra work from teachers who are poorly paid and may feel that their professionalism is insufficiently respected in the community.

It can also be difficult to introduce new programmes, particularly to move from the pilot project phase to inclusion in the formal curriculum, in countries where education reform is contested, or in its early stages. Ministries of Education and schools can become overloaded with change and new initiatives and it is a genuine problem to decide on educational priorities. The introduction of EHL in secondary schools is also not without controversy. At the 'Consultation on Children, Small Arms and Education' sponsored by UNDP – SEESAC in June 2006, Mr Miljenko Dereta of the NGO Civic Initiatives expressed the view that EHL was not appropriate for secondary schools, and should be offered at university level.¹⁴⁸ This is an interesting point, especially in view of the lack of education and awareness raising about international humanitarian law among young adults and key groups in society: police, the judiciary, teachers and civic society representatives.

Dr Dragan Papadic, Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade, reviewed the material in 2003 and commented on the complexities of introducing such material in schools in Serbia and Montenegro:

*"Regardless of the fact that the EHL does not specifically treat events from our recent history, but builds on numerous situations from wars waged throughout the world throughout history, in the society like ours, which has gone through a series of armed conflicts, this programme necessarily opens a number of traumatic questions, some of which have remained taboos. This fact puts both teachers and students into a delicate position and that is why this dimension will merit particular attention in the training of teachers, notably in determining to what extent and in what way to deal with the past decade's events in this country and the region."*¹⁴⁹

The EHL programme was piloted with 16 and 17 year olds in Serbia in 2003 and 2004 and there was an external evaluation by the Centre for Evaluation in Education and the Institute of Psychology of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade of the impact of EHL on the pilot group of 16 secondary schools in Belgrade and the police cadet school. The evaluation "revealed a positive correlation between the level of IHL knowledge and students' attitudes towards humanitarian engagement, social responsibility and concern for other people."¹⁵⁰

ICRC in Serbia and Montenegro started working on the programme in 2001. There was a concern from some psychologists and educators that some children and young people, especially IDPs (Internally Displaced People) might suffer secondary trauma as a result of dealing with the material in the course. Consequently the package was adapted to meet the perceived needs of children in this country, by a local NGO, 'Grupa MOST', with extensive experience and expertise in peace research and education and conflict resolution.¹⁵¹ The Ministry of Education accredited this adaptation in 2003. Subsequently there were significant changes in the Ministry of Education, and the process was stalled, resuming again in 2004. The course is targeted at 13 - 18 year old students, but the Ministry was concerned about secondary trauma, and stipulated that it should only be offered to students over 16 years. ICRC tested the package again at a summer camp in Sandzak, and sought feedback from teachers and students. 'Grupa MOST' trained teachers in Serbia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Teachers expressed the need for more support in teaching the course, so an additional course 'Coping with Emotions' was developed.

¹⁴⁷ Meeting with Ms Miranda Kasneci Deputy head, Pre-University Education, Ministry of Education and Science, Kosovo, and Mr Idriz Gashi, ICRC, Kosovo.

¹⁴⁸ Mr Miljenko Dereta, Civic Initiatives, Consultation of Education and Small Arms, June 2006, Belgrade, Serbia. Comment from ICRC: Ministries of Education in the region do not agree, and welcome the secondary school material on EHL.

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList568/70B48E1A79E07881C1256DF2003CC548>, accessed 03 April 2006.

¹⁵⁰ [http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/6D5EAF/\\$FILE/icrc_ar_04_serbia.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/6D5EAF/$FILE/icrc_ar_04_serbia.pdf?OpenElement), accessed 12 April, 2006.

¹⁵¹ Grupa MOST, http://www.most.org.yu/index_e.html, accessed 03 May 2006.



ICRC also started working on a strategy for implementation of the package in Montenegro in 2001. Teachers have been trained this year, 2006, and the Ministry has expressed interest in integrating EHL in to the curriculum after the pilot testing. The ICRC Delegation in Bosnia and Herzegovina produced a video in 2003, describing the piloting of the programme, and the reactions of students and teachers.¹⁵² In Croatia ICRC has handed over the EHL programme to the Ministry of Education. Feedback from students and teachers has been very positive, and an external evaluation is planned for 2006.¹⁵³ EHL is also part of non-formal education in Croatia, as the national Red Cross offers it to young people through their Youth Clubs. No doubt when the module on weapons and international humanitarian law becomes available both the Ministry of Education and the national Red Cross will consider using it.

The ICRC and the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union held a meeting in Vienna in May 2006 to discuss the EU's recommendations that education programmes on international humanitarian law such as EHL be included in Active Citizenship programmes in schools in the EU. The Council of the European Union and the EU National Red Cross Societies made joint pledges at the 2003 International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent to include EHL in secondary education. Representatives from Ministries of Education and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies from EU countries, candidate countries, EFTA countries and the Western Balkans attended the meeting.



Picture 10: Promotion of humanitarian values programme: a negotiation exercise (Copyright ICRC/Agnès Montanari)

ICRC is currently developing a module on weapons and humanitarian law, which will include a section on small arms. The programme already includes a module on anti-personnel mines that will be expanded to address issues related to weapons and international humanitarian law more generally. Communication with Camilla Waszink, National Society and Policy Adviser, Mines-Arms Unit, ICRC, Geneva resulted in the following statement:

"The ICRC does not have an official position on SALW education as such. In terms of our own approach, and as I mentioned previously, we are planning on including the subject of unregulated arms availability in the context of the EHL programme. In that regard, it would be presented more as a general issue of humanitarian concern. In some

*contexts, we may also include messages related to small arms in broader risk education activities on landmines and explosive remnants of war."*¹⁵⁴

The 'Promoting Human Values' programme, implemented in Macedonia:

Box 17: 'Exploitation of Violence – The Violence of Exploitation'

The module 'The Exploitation of Violence - the Violence of Exploitation' is an educational module for young people from 10 years on. It was first launched in cooperation with UNICEF in 1999 and revised in 2002. It deals with violence committed against children. Such exploitation takes advantage of the children's vulnerability and denies them their right to human dignity. The module is designed to provide material for two to four hours of activity. It includes a videocassette with two 13-minutes films (one on child soldiers and one on child labour) and teaching notes with suggestions for use, explanations and background information (30 sheets, format A4). The module exists in French, English, Italian and German.

The 'Promoting Human Values' (PHV) programme in Macedonia was launched in 1996 in cooperation with the Norwegian Red Cross and aims at breaking down the barriers and combatting attitudes that can lead to conflict.

Source: http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/section_other_modules?OpenDocument

¹⁵² http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/section_video_western_europe?OpenDocument, accessed 01 May 2006.

¹⁵³ Email communication from Martina Murgic, (Our Ref - Zagreb/ZAG06E337 : Ms MURGIC Martina Re EHL) 17 May 2006.

¹⁵⁴ Email communication, Camilla Waszink, Ref - DC_JUR_MINA/GVA06E511; 24 May 2006.



6.9.2 Civic Education

All countries of the region have introduced Civic Education since the end of the conflicts of the 1990s.¹⁵⁵ The consensus among educators and Ministry of Education officials contacted was that this subject already has sufficient content, and it is not possible to keep adding new topics and material. The subject has its own internal logic, and it is educationally unsound to treat it as a grab bag of topics, and keep adding new social issues as they arise (or are framed by donors as new issues.)

6.9.3 Peace and Disarmament Education

Box 18: Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate

'Peacemaking means getting up every single day and working hard for global peace. It's not doves or nice paintings or bad poetry; it's hard work.'

"Peace Education is a generic term used to describe a range of formal and informal educational activities undertaken to promote peace in schools and communities through the inculcation of skills, attitudes, and values that promote non-violent approaches to managing conflict and promoting tolerance and respect for diversity".¹⁵⁶

UNICEF defines peace education as:

*"the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, inter-group, national or international level. **Because lasting behaviour change in children and adults only occurs over time, effective peace education is necessarily a long-term process, not a short-term intervention**"¹⁵⁷ (emphasis added).*

"The process of changing behaviour proceeds through a sequence of stages in which an individual:

- *Becomes aware of the issue (peace and conflict);*
- *Becomes concerned about the issue;*
- *Acquires knowledge and skills pertaining to the issue;*
- *Becomes motivated, based on new attitudes and values;*
- *Intends to act;*
- *Tries out a new behaviour (for example, peaceful conflict resolution);*
- *Evaluates the trial; and*
- *Practices the recommended behaviour".¹⁵⁸*

UNICEF and a number of other international NGOs have supported pilot projects on Peace Education, but it is rare for the approach to become an integral part of the school curriculum. Buckland lists, in Box 19, some of the 'lessons learned' from attempts to introduce peace education.

¹⁵⁵ The status of Civic Education in Serbia is still not clear.

¹⁵⁶ Buckland, Peter (2005) 'Reshaping the Future: Education and Post Conflict Reconstruction', p. 78. http://www1.worldbank.org/education/pdf/Reshaping_the_Future.pdf, accessed 30 May 2006.

¹⁵⁷ http://www.unicef.org/girlseducation/index_focus_peace_education.html, accessed 05 June 2006.

¹⁵⁸ Peace Education in UNICEF, Susan Fountain, June 1999, p. 5 <http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/PeaceEducationUNICEF.pdf>, accessed 14 May 2006.



Box 19: Lessons Learned from Introducing Peace Education in Post-conflict Societies

- Ill-conceived, stand-alone initiatives emanating from well-meaning outsiders have little positive impact, tend to crowd an already overcrowded curriculum, and collapse as soon as external funding does.
- Peace education initiatives and attempts at forced school integration of alienated communities have limited chances of success.
- Peace education in schools that is linked to wider peace building in the community is more likely to make an impact on student behaviour.
- Programs should focus on a wider range of issues than 'peace'—such as life-skills, citizenship, human rights, and health-promotion/HIV/AIDS prevention.
- Attempts at integration of peace education messages 'across the curriculum' have been less successful than programs that have a dedicated slot in the curriculum.
- Nonetheless, all curricula should be scrutinized for messages, explicit and implicit, that militate against the inculcation of attitudes of tolerance and acceptance of cultural, ethnic, or religious differences. Such scrutiny is a necessary precursor to peace education programs, which have been shown to be more successful where they combine specific targeted classroom activities with a concern for ensuring that the entire curriculum, formal and hidden, helps to support the messages of the peace education activities.

Source: Buckland, Peter www1.worldbank.org/education/pdf/Reshaping_the_Future.pdf accessed 30 May 2006

Disarmament education has tended to mean education about nuclear disarmament, but although UNICEF has attempted a definition of Peace/Disarmament education, it is unlikely that this topic will attract attention at school level. The objective is to initiate change in the attitudes and behaviour of children, their families and communities to oppose the use of small arms. The strategy is to develop children's skills for conflict resolution, offer alternative behaviours to youth, and build pressure for changes in public policy through youth involvement in peace-building at community and national levels.

6.9.4 Life Skills

UNICEF has a range of programmes under the umbrella of 'Life Skills',¹⁵⁹ including health education, human rights and social issues, violence prevention and peace building, child friendly schools. There is no definitive list of life skills. The list in Annex A includes the psychosocial and interpersonal skills generally considered important. The choice of, and emphasis on, different skills will vary according to the topic and local conditions (e.g., decision-making may feature strongly in HIV/AIDS prevention whereas conflict management may be more prominent in a peace education program). Though the list suggests these categories are distinct from each other, many skills are used simultaneously in practice. For example, decision-making often involves critical thinking ('what are my options?') and values clarification ('what is important to me?'). Ultimately, the interplay between the skills is what produces powerful behavioural outcomes, especially where this approach is supported by other strategies such as media, policies and health services.¹⁶⁰

6.9.5 Schools without Violence (UNICEF and local partners)

Croatia

"UNICEF has focused efforts on a high-profile campaign to reduce violence in schools. The project involves raising awareness of the issue through fundraising concerts and TV shows, developing a model for violence prevention, training 54 teacher-trainers, and bringing the model and knowledge to 121 schools. At the end of the programme's first year, 13 schools were declared 'violence-free'. The Croatian government's response to

¹⁵⁹ See Annex A for a list of the skills encompassed in these programmes.

¹⁶⁰ http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_whichskills.html accessed 30 May 2006. See also the WHO publication 'Skills for Health' that does not address small arms injuries and violence directly, but the approach and the skills covered in health education programmes would also provide young people with the skills to deal with risk-taking related to weapons and choose alternatives to violence. <http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/files/SkillsForHealth230503.pdf> accessed 14 November 2006.



*the violence-reduction campaign has been strongly positive. Building on the success of the programme, the government has developed a national campaign to combat violence”.*¹⁶¹

A possible model for violence prevention programmes has been developed in the USA by the National School Safety Center; it indicates the need for a comprehensive and long-term approach, not quick-fix projects.

Serbia

There are several projects dealing with violence in schools in Serbia: ‘Schools without Violence’, ‘Improving School Safety’ and ‘Prevention of Student Delinquency in the School Environment’. The ‘Schools without Violence’ project is a joint UNICEF and Ministry of Education and Sport activity, while the other two projects were developed in response to concerns by schools and the Ministry.

Kosovo

It is likely that UNICEF in Kosovo will support some programmes in response to the report on ‘Violence in Schools’.



Figure 8: UNICEF Serbia ‘Schools without Violence’ project

Box 1

Model Community-Based Violence Prevention Programs

The National School Safety Center, a nonprofit organization that aims to prevent school violence and promote safe schools, describes model community violence prevention programs as incorporating the following:

1. Respect for the culture of the community as a whole and for individuals within the community
2. Problem-solving approaches
3. Acknowledgment of fear as a reality in the lives of children
4. Assessment of successful practices in other communities
5. Youth involvement
6. Formation of both formal and informal leaders
7. Ambitious but realistic program goals
8. Recognition of the community's limits and links
9. A means for assessment and evaluation

Source: Arredondo, S., Aultman-Bettridge, T., Johnson, T.P., et al. Preventing youth handgun violence: A national study with trends and patterns for the state of Colorado. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 1999.

Picture 11: A US Model for a Violence Prevention Programme¹⁶²

6.9.6 Human Rights Education

A range of organisations has implemented Human Rights Education programmes in the region, including Care International in Kosovo but the most comprehensive approach comes from OSCE. The manual is available in all the languages of the region and the programme has been piloted in each country. The programme has also been evaluated.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/croatia_background.html, accessed 07 March 2006.

http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2006/10/21819_en.pdf, accessed 13 November 2006. This programme has been functioning since 2003.

¹⁶² http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/tfoc_12-2h.pdf, accessed 07 March 2006.

¹⁶³ http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2005/04/13742_en.pdf, accessed 24 July 2006. This manual can be downloaded from the OSCE website in English, Albanian, Croatian, Macedonian, Romany, Serbian, and Turkish. Evaluation of the OSCE Pilot Project on Human Rights Education ‘OUR RIGHTS’ initiated by the Slovenian Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2005 FINAL REPORT By Mitja Sardoč.



In Croatia a local NGO, funded by UNICEF, developed an excellent programme incorporating human rights education within a framework of non-violence education: 'Opening the Doors to Non-Violence' in 1998.

6.9.7 Mine Risk Education (MRE)

At first sight, it may seem that there are significant similarities between mine risk education and education about small arms/guns. In fact, 'small arms risk education' has been proposed by analogy with MRE. It needs to be said that no educator would pose the question in this way: this perspective derives from those already involved in Mine Risk Education, and in my view, it should be a non-issue. Within UNICEF, small arms is currently linked with mine awareness education within the Emergency section, and two countries, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, have developed integrated curricula; in Albania a general safety curriculum (mines, weapons, fireworks and first aid) and in BiH a MRE and Small Arms 'Risk' Education curriculum. A number of people have commented that the 'small arms field' is at the same stage as mine action was about ten years ago. These statements are worrying, as they assume commonalities without deeper thinking and review of relevant evidence.¹⁶⁴ They also look through a small arms lens, rather than using the need and rights of children as a starting point.¹⁶⁵

It would be important to do a long-term evaluation of the BiH project, as it is the most professionally designed and comprehensive project on small arms education. Unfortunately, given the policies of donors, it is highly unlikely that such a long-term evaluation will be done. In the absence of such an evaluation, and the lack of data about the effectiveness of such an exercise, there is no justification for replicating it.

6.9.8 Crime Prevention Programmes

A number of crime prevention programmes have been developed for UK schools:

- 'Untouchable' DVD and teacher's manual on rising rates of gun crime in UK;
- 'Me, Myself and Eye' for year 6 related to community safety, crime, decision-making;
- Crimestoppers, parents' leaflet;
- 'Split Second' – firearms (replicas);
- 'Watch over Me' – violence, personal safety teaching program. Soap opera; and

¹⁶⁴ The Geneva International Centre on Humanitarian Demining has just published a report on this issue: 'Identifying Synergies between Mine Action and Small Arms and Light Weapons.' The study refers in particular to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Cambodia, and quotes the Handicap International and Genesis projects in BiH. Although the general conclusion is that there is very little synergy between mine action and SALW awareness, they do cite these two examples of links between MRE and 'risk education', without pointing out that neither have been evaluated for effectiveness (the HI/Ministry of Education programmes has not yet been implemented) or examining the concept of 'small arms risk education' in any depth. www.gichd.ch/fileadmin/pdf/about_gichd/press/press_releases/061106_MA_and_SALW_e.pdf, accessed 15 November 2006.

¹⁶⁵ An evaluation of UNICEF's role in MRE and to an extent in small arms work made the following points:

The position of LASAT (landmines and small arms team) was vacant for almost 9/12 in 2004 (p. 7).

'The small arms issue sits uncomfortably with some mine action donors, whereas for others the same funding stream may be used.'

'Some donors cite MRE as the most effective pillar of mine action and the cause of decreases in new victims – although absolute numbers are increasing – and that the slow rate of clearance could not have created such an effect. Other donors state clearly, that impact of MRE is unproven and the benefits of informing people of a risk and appropriate behaviour, without providing alternate options, is a waste of donor funds. There is also a difference of opinion regarding the role of UNDP, UNICEF and UNMAS in mine action.' (p. 7).

'Some donors indicate a shift towards more mainstreamed funding and towards broader ERW and small arms consideration related to impact of war.' (p. 27).

'Since 2004 UNICEF has assisted the humanitarian policy unit consider impact of ERW, notably cluster munitions and small arms. At CO [country office] level, however, there is little evidence of support to local campaigns or advocacy regarding weapons use or impact. The exact area of support provision and division of responsibility between the policy units and LASAT vis-à-vis COs on advocacy is somewhat undefined and under resourced.' (p. 43).

'UNICEF should consider broadening the scope of its mine action strategy to include the impact of small arms on children during and after conflict. This recommendation is outside of the terms of reference of this evaluation. However, a significant majority of key informant and focus group interviewed expressed this need and the appropriateness of UNICEF as an agent for small arms risk reduction as part of child protection.' (72) EVALUATION OF UNICEF'S SUPPORT TO MINE ACTION UNICEF Ref: EMER ICC 2005-005, Taz Khaliq <http://www.mineaction.org/downloads/1/Evaluation%20Report%20EMER%20ICC%202005.pdf>, accessed 18 August 2006.



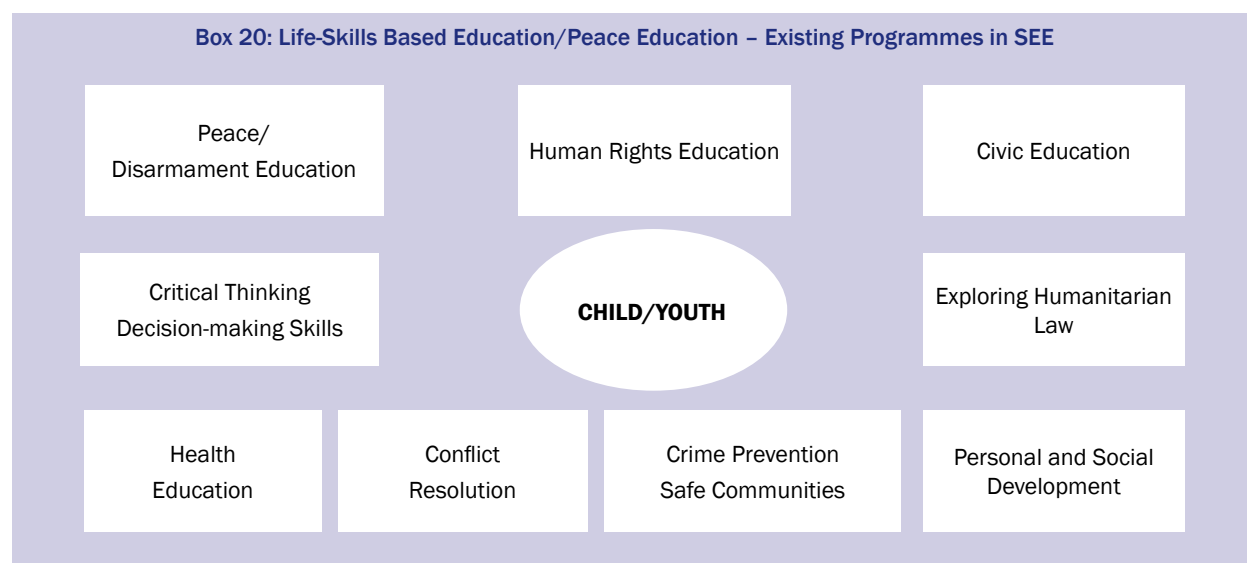
- 'From Boyhood to Manhood Foundation' – programmes for school & community, targets inner city young black men (school exclusions, gangs, violence).¹⁶⁶

These programmes are well-designed, based on UK curriculum development guidelines, and often involve a range of stakeholders: schools, police, community groups and the media in development. They have the potential to be effective since teachers and schools have the freedom to incorporate such materials in the school curriculum. Most of these programmes approach the issue of guns and violence in a deeper way than the simple focus on guns adopted in US 'gun safety' programmes. These programmes offer interesting models for the development of programmes to address youth, crime and firearms, where there is solid data that such a problem exists.

In Macedonia Inspector Cena Calovska and several colleagues, working voluntarily, have developed an informal education programme about weapons and crime. The programme was developed in response to concerns about the increasing use of 'cold weapons', that is knives and knuckle-dusters.

6.9.9 Overview of Life-Skills, Peace Education and Related Education Programmes

Research and consultation for the Curriculum Project revealed that there were already a wide variety of programmes in schools teaching knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours relevant to the issues raised by the excessive numbers of weapons in SEE.¹⁶⁷ Even if the concept of 'small arms risk education' were educationally valid, there is still the question of whether schools have the capacity to continue adding topics and single-issue curricula to their programmes. The following two tables support the view that there is no space in the school curriculum for new material, and that existing initiatives are more than adequate for assisting young people to respond to the risks and challenges of small arms where they do have an impact on their present experience.



¹⁶⁶ For further information see the SEESAC website: <http://www.seesac.org>.

¹⁶⁷ See the list of skills covered by UNICEF 'Life Skills' programmes in Annex A.



EDUCATION PROGRAMMES	ALBANIA	BIH ¹⁶⁸	CROATIA	FYROM	KOSOVO	MONTE-NEGRO	SERBIA
Promoting human values				Norwegian Red Cross			
Exploitation of Violence				X			
Civic Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Human Rights Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	X ¹⁶⁹
Peace Education		NGOS in schools		X	(in some schools, CARE)		
Life Skills					UNICEF piloted		
Non-violence Violence Prevention	UNICEF ¹⁷⁰		X				X
'Schools without violence'			Since 2003		Plans for the future	X	X
Exploring Humanitarian Law	Piloted	Piloted	Piloted	Integrated into schools	Piloted	Piloted	Piloted
Global Education	Albania ¹⁷¹						
Small arms		Planned for academic year 2006-7, with MRE	Croatia in late 1990s		Programs funded by UNDP		
Domestic Violence	UNICEF training for teachers						
Blood feud	UNICEF support to affected children						
Conflict Resolution Skills				Search for Common Ground, several projects 2000			
Crime Prevention						(informal)	X

Table 5: Overview of Education Programmes in SEE¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Bosnia and Herzegovina.

¹⁶⁹ OSCE has funded programmes throughout the region. <http://www.osce.org/cio/13741.html>, accessed 15 March 2006. Meetings were held with Staff of OSCE in Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro. These programmes have been well received, but sustainability is an issue. NGOs have delivered HRE programmes in Kosovo.

¹⁷⁰ Teachers in 40 elementary schools have been trained in how to recognize and assist children facing violence at home or elsewhere, and over 3,000 students have participated in creative workshops on non-violent behaviour. http://www.unicef.org/albania/protection_707.html, accessed 07 March 2006.

¹⁷¹ UNICEF supported programme: 'This initiative aims to improve the quality of primary education by integrating subjects such as environment, health and peace. A Global Education centre has been established in each of Albania's 12 districts, and 8,000 children are benefiting.' http://www.unicef.org/albania/education_665.html, accessed 07 March 2006.

¹⁷² This is not a comprehensive overview, but it is intended to show the diversity of programmes relevant to life skills and peace education. It should therefore be clear that additional stand-alone projects are not necessary.



7 Conclusions

Notwithstanding the findings of the SALW Education Consultant about the appropriateness of SALW Education being included within national school curricula, much useful data and experience was obtained on the linkages and psychology of children, youth and weapons. It is hoped that this work will inform reasoned, evidence-based debate and discussion on the issues. Furthermore, after an extensive review of the psychological, public health and educational literature on child development, risk-taking among children and youth, injury prevention, 'gun safety' education and the role of media violence and wide-ranging consultations with relevant organisations and professionals (UNICEF, ICRC, OSCE, WHO, Ministries of Education, NGOs) the following can be concluded.

7.1 Impact data

- There is a need for public health data on the impact of small arms on children, both directly (injuries and deaths) and indirectly (the impact of suicide in the family and domestic violence).
- There was little evidence of a direct impact of weapons on children and youth.

7.2 Understanding the issue

- Approaches to the issue of children and small arms in SEE generally lacked a children's rights approach and were not based on knowledge of child development and education.
- There is a disturbing lack of awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child among some UN staff and staff of Ministries of the Interior.
- Addressing the issue of small arms and children from a technical perspective, based on an arms control model, or by analogy with mine action programmes, is misconceived.
- There has been little consultation with young people about their concerns (including security concerns), combined with a tendency to assume that small arms is an issue for them, and fund projects designed by external actors.

7.3 Educational programmes

- The concept of 'small arms risk education' is not an educationally valid concept. The Canadian and American Pediatric Societies have both made formal official statements drawing attention to the research that questions the validity and effectiveness of 'gun safety' programmes, and advising against their use at the present time.
- The small arms education projects already implemented were generally stand-alone, short-term projects, adding to the burden of schools and teachers and without demonstrated effectiveness.
- Some of the small arms programmes already implemented were relatively expensive, short-term, and added on to the school curriculum, occasioning resentment from badly paid teachers at the extra work, and achieving relatively little.
- Emphasising small arms as an issue and funding specific programmes targeting the issue with children has the potential to do harm, in making gun owners and government authorities complacent about community safety, and removes the responsibility from the appropriate people.
- There have been weapons collections programmes and some awareness raising about celebratory gunfire, but otherwise few attempts to target gun owners who must hold the responsibility for the safe use and storage of their lethal weapons.
- Educational systems in the region are still in a process of reform and attempts to add single topics to the curriculum are unlikely to succeed.
- Ministries of Education and children's organisations do not see small arms as a priority issue in education or child protection, although they are aware of the problem of excess weapons in SEE.
- Little attention has been paid to the role of the media in presenting images of violence to children, often in contexts where such violence had no negative consequences, and was even presented as glamorous.



8 Recommendations – what next?

8.1 The need for data

There is a need for public health data¹⁷³ on the impact of small arms on children and young people. This should be implemented as part of an integrated programme to improve data collection about the incidence and causes of all accidents and injuries among young people.

There is also a need for research in the region on the impact of violence in the media on children and young people, and the role that the media play in glamorising weapons and violence.

8.2 Inclusion in broader issues

It is recommended that a public health approach be introduced to respond to the problem of small arms in the region, as there is a lack of 'actionable' data on the impact of small arms on children and youth. A public health approach would also highlight the role of small arms in domestic violence and in suicide, both of which impact on the whole family. There is a particular need in Croatia, based on evidence from the SALW Survey, for research and programming to address the employment and mental health needs of veterans and their families.

The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children has revealed disturbing levels of violence against children and the lack of awareness of adults, both at the individual and policy making level, of this issue. Children have reported that they do not feel adults listen and respond to their concerns about bullying and other forms of violence in school, family and community. The issue of firearms should be viewed as one aspect of this larger problem, and programmes should address the root causes of such violence. Ministries of Education should continue and strengthen their commitment to the development of schools as 'zones of peace' and safe places for children, where children's rights are integral to the functioning of the schools. The issue of violence in schools, an international problem, should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

As the presence of firearms in the home contributes to increasing the level of violence where domestic violence is already present, the appropriate response is to continue with arms control and weapons collection programmes, changes in the law to make domestic violence illegal, programmes to raise awareness of the extent and costs of domestic violence, and improved reporting and data collection.

Current small arms control and security sector reform programmes have an overly technical focus, and do not address the security concerns of the community. In view of the fact that many guns owners give personal and family security as their reason for gun ownership, this is a significant gap. Civil society groups such as those working on behalf of women, religious communities, veterans, youth etc, should be consulted on small arms and security issues, so that safer communities, free of excess weapons, can be created together. Furthermore, there are high levels of dissatisfaction among young people in the region, combined with low levels of participation in society. Governments, community groups, parents and teachers need to create opportunities for young people's voices to be heard, and then create programmes together to address their concerns.

8.3 What kind of education?

As the proposed concept of 'small arms risk education' has been shown to lack validity, such programmes should not be supported and encouraged. Where they are already planned, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there should be a comprehensive independent evaluation.

Education and awareness programmes on small arms should focus on adults, particularly gun owners, and should support the significant number of citizens, especially women, who see weapons as dangerous and do not want them in homes.

¹⁷³ See *Strategic overview of armed violence data collection and analysis mechanisms* (South Eastern Europe), SEESAC 2006 <http://www.seesac.org>.



8.4 Whose responsibility?

The governments of SEE have a clear responsibility through their ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to protect children from violence and harm. Governments and gun owners must be held to account for any violence involving children and small arms. Gun owners must be held responsible under the law if a minor has access to their weapons and harms themselves or others.

UNICEF is the lead agency on education and child protection in the UN system, and should take the lead role in responding to the issue of small arms and children. Their assessment of the level of priority of this issue for children, (based on well-established principles of children's rights programming, coherent planning based on the Millennium Development Goals and consultation with governments and other stakeholders), should be respected. UNDP's role should be to consult with young people about their security concerns, and support the development of programmes responding to the needs of young people, such as National Youth Action Plans.

The temptation to create a new issue of 'small arms and children', with specific funding, should be resisted. The impact of small arms on children in the region needs more attention, but within the context of the safety and security of children and support for peaceful conflict resolution in post-conflict societies. Existing programmes on child protection, education for peace, conflict resolution, human rights education, schools without violence, should be funded and supported so that these approaches become integral to curricula and the functioning of the school system.





Annex A – UNICEF Like Skills

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal communication skills

- Verbal/Nonverbal communication.
- Active listening.
- Expressing feelings; giving feedback (without blaming) and receiving feedback.

Negotiation/refusal skills

- Negotiation and conflict management.
- Assertiveness skills.
- Refusal skills.

Empathy

- Ability to listen and understand another's needs and circumstances and express that understanding.

Cooperation and Teamwork

- Expressing respect for others' contributions and different styles.
- Assessing one's own abilities and contributing to the group.

Advocacy Skills

- Influencing skills and persuasion.
- Networking and motivation skills.

Decision-Making and Critical Thinking Skills

Decision making / problem solving skills

- Information gathering skills.
- Evaluating future consequences of present actions for self and others.
- Determining alternative solutions to problems.
- Analysis skills regarding the influence of values and attitudes of self and others on motivation.

Critical thinking skills

- Analysing peer and media influences.
- Analysing attitudes, values, social norms and beliefs and factors affecting these.
- Identifying relevant information and information sources.

Coping and Self-Management Skills

Skills for increasing internal locus of control

- Self-esteem / confidence-building skills.



- Self-awareness skills including awareness of rights, influences, values, attitudes, rights, strengths and weaknesses.
- Goal setting skills.
- Self-evaluation / Self-assessment / Self-monitoring skills.

Skills for managing feelings

- Anger management.
- Dealing with grief and anxiety.
- Coping skills for dealing with loss, abuse, trauma.

Skills for managing stress

- Time management.
- Positive thinking.
- Relaxation techniques.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_whichskills.html accessed 30 May 2006. See also the WHO publication 'Skills for Health' which does not address small arms injuries and violence directly, but the approach and the skills covered in health education programmes would also provide young people with the skills to deal with risk-taking related to weapons and choose alternatives to violence.
<http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/files/SkillsForHealth230503.pdf> accessed 14 November 2006



Glossary – Terms and Definitions

child friendly schools ¹⁷⁵

UNICEF has developed a framework for rights-based, child-friendly educational systems and schools that are characterized as ‘inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, effective with children, and involved with families and communities - and children’ (Shaeffer, 1999).

child protection ¹⁷⁶

the term Child Protection, as used by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), refers to the protection of children against violence, exploitation, and abuse. It includes the situation of children in conflict with the law, and children without their customary caregivers (such as orphans, children in institutions, and those separated from families in time of conflict or disaster)—conditions that render children particularly vulnerable to violence, abuse, and exploitation.

Child Action Prevention (CAP) laws ¹⁷⁷

Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws, often referred to as ‘Safe Storage’ or ‘gun owner responsibility’ laws, generally require adults to either store loaded guns in a place that is reasonably inaccessible to children, or use a device to lock the gun. If a child obtains an improperly stored, loaded gun, the adult owner is criminally liable.

disarmament education ¹⁷⁸

the objective is to initiate change in the attitudes and behaviour of children, their families and communities to oppose the use of small arms. The strategy is to develop children’s skills for conflict resolution, offer alternative behaviours to youth, and build pressure for changes in public policy through youth involvement in peace-building at community and national levels.

the hidden curriculum ¹⁷⁹

although not the first sociologist to use the concept, the phrase ‘hidden curriculum’ was originally coined by Philip Jackson (*Life In Classrooms*, 1968) to draw attention to the idea that schools do more than simply aid the transmission of knowledge between one generation and the next. Jackson argues that we need to understand “education” as a socialisation process. That is, a process that involves the transmission of norms and values as well as a body of socially-approved knowledge (that also involves socially-derived conceptions of what constitutes valid knowledge, acceptable levels of understanding and so forth). We have to understand not just the social construction of knowledge (the way cultures define and produce what they consider to be valid forms of knowledge), but also the way the teaching and learning process is socially-constructed. In this respect, Jackson summarises this idea when he argues: “*The hidden curriculum refers to ways in which pupils learn to accept the denial and interruption of their personal desires and wishes*”. The basic idea behind the concept of the hidden curriculum, therefore, is that pupils learn things that are not actually taught in the formal curriculum and, in this respect, the concept of a hidden curriculum refers to the way the learning process is organised.

¹⁷⁵ Source: UNICEF - http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7260.html, accessed 24 May 2006.

¹⁷⁶ Source: Lindgren, Karin, ‘The Protective Environment: Development Support for Child Protection’, *Human Rights Quarterly* 27 (2005) 214-248, p. 216.

¹⁷⁷ Source: The Brady Campaign - <http://www.bradiycampaign.org/facts/faqs/?page=cap>, accessed 15 November 2006.

¹⁷⁸ Source: UNICEF - http://www.unicef.org/girls_education/index_focus_peace_education.html, accessed 04 June 2006.

¹⁷⁹ Source: <http://www.sociology.org.uk/tece1tl.htm>, accessed 20 May 2006.



life skills ¹⁸⁰

this term refers to a large group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them lead a healthy and productive life. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions and actions toward others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health.

mine risk education ¹⁸¹

mine risk education (MRE) is defined as: those activities which lessen the probability and/or severity of physical injury to people, property or the environment. Mine risk education can be achieved by physical measures such as clearance, fencing or marking, or through behavioural changes brought about by MRE.

peace education ¹⁸²

‘the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, inter-group, national or international level. Because lasting behaviour change in children and adults only occurs over time, effective peace education is necessarily a long-term process, not a short-term intervention.’

small arms ¹⁸³

the term ‘small arms’ refers to ‘weapons designed for individual use. They include, inter alia, revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns’.

SALW ¹⁸⁴

all lethal conventional munitions that can be carried by an individual combatant or a light vehicle, that also do not require a substantial logistic and maintenance capability.

SALW Risk Education ¹⁸⁵

SALW Risk Education is a process that promotes the adoption of safer behaviours by at-risk groups and by SALW-holders by informing people of the dangers and threats of SALW and educating them about alternatives and safer behaviours.

Note: This definition is of questionable educational validity.

¹⁸⁰ Source: UNICEF - http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7308.html, accessed 05 June 2006.

¹⁸¹ Source: International Mine Action Standards, Glossary (3.161) http://www.mineactionstandards.org/IMAS_archive/Amended/Amended3/IMAS%2004.10%20Glossary%20of%20mine%20action%20terms,%20definitions%20and%20abbreviations%20_Edition%202_.pdf, accessed 12 November 2006.

¹⁸² Source: http://www.unicef.org/girlseducation/index_focus_peace_education.html, accessed 06 June 2006.

¹⁸³ <http://www.un.org/events/smallarms2006/faq.html>, accessed on 04 October 2006.

¹⁸⁴ Source: [http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2002.10%20Glossary%20and%20Definitions%20\(Edition%204\).pdf](http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2002.10%20Glossary%20and%20Definitions%20(Edition%204).pdf), accessed 04 October 2006.

¹⁸⁵ Source: <http://www.seesac.org/reports/SASP%202%20handbook.pdf>, accessed 02 June 2006.



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