



Martha, Age: 16, Country: Sierra Leone

Martha's Story

The Impact of Armed Conflict

LESSON PLANS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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President, U.S. Fund for UNICEF
Caryl M. Stern

**Managing Director, Education
and Community Partnerships**
Meg Gardinier, MS

Senior Education Advisor
Cassie Landers, Ed. D., MPH

Director of Education
Marie P. Bresnahan, MPH

Author
Susan Fountain, MS

Martha's Story

Unit Overview

SUBJECT: Social Studies

LEVEL: Middle School

Unit Overview

Martha's Story is designed to use with middle school students. The content can be adapted for use with older or younger students. The 2 days' lessons are designed to:

1. Raise students' awareness of the effect of armed conflict upon civilians
2. Increase students' understanding of the impact of armed conflict upon children in particular
3. Explore solutions and programs that can help children and teens in times of armed conflict

Lesson 1: Students explore the impact of war on children by:

- * Examining drawings made by children who have experienced war
- * Viewing a video of Martha, a girl from Sierra Leone, who has lived through civil war
- * Read a story that further explains the effect of war on her life

Lesson 2: Students:

- * Use statistics to gain insight into the impact of armed conflict on children
- * Consider the types of programs developed to meet the needs of war-affected children
- * Examine UNICEF's actions in the field during situations of armed conflict using the case-study method

Tip!

Teachers' Tip

While this unit was designed to be taught over two consecutive days, feel free to customize it to fit your specific curriculum schedule.

Background

Armed conflict causes children to miss out on their childhood in many ways. The most direct physical impact is death—according to UNICEF, more than 2 million children have died in armed conflicts in the past decade. At least 6 million children have been seriously injured or disabled.

Tip!**Teachers' Tip**

Information on sexual violence is included as background for the teacher only. It is not mentioned in the materials for students.

Conflict increases the risk of children being exposed to abuse, violence, and exploitation, with sexual violence often used as a weapon of war. Disruption of the local water and electricity supplies in times of armed conflict increases the spread of disease in war-affected areas. This creates stressed and/or damaged health care systems which are often ill equipped to deal with the casualties—including HIV/AIDS and other infections—that result.

Armed conflict has a psychological impact on children as well. In the past 10 years, an estimated 20 million children have been forced to flee their homes because of conflict. Many of these children are either living as refugees in neighboring countries or are internally displaced within their own national borders. More than 1 million children have been orphaned or separated from their families during this time.

War interrupts children's chances to go to school, causing long-term harm to their learning and employment possibilities. Schools are often targeted for destruction by armed groups, depriving children of a much-needed sense of routine and normalcy, as well as hope for the future.

The psychological impact is especially devastating for the estimated 300,000 child soldiers—boys and girls under the age of 18—who are currently involved in more than 30 conflicts worldwide. They are used as combatants, messengers, porters, and cooks. They are also used to provide sexual services. Some are forcibly recruited or abducted. Others are driven to join by poverty, abuse, and discrimination. Still others join in order to seek revenge for violence enacted against themselves and their families. Many of these children have difficulties reintegrating into their communities when conflicts end, and may be rejected by family and community members because of the acts they have been forced to commit.

UNICEF's Role

In addition to partnering with other organizations to provide essential supplies (food, water, medical supplies) during armed conflict, UNICEF works to help:

- * Disarm and reintegrate child soldiers back into their communities
- * Reunite children with their families
- * Provide basic education
- * Ensure that services reach children who are disabled or affected by HIV/AIDS

Tip!**Teachers' Tip**

To read more about armed conflict and UNICEF's work, go to: www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1.

Tip!**Teachers' Tip**

More information on UNICEF's work in Sierra Leone can be found at: www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1. There, you'll also find an article on postwar education.

**Evaluation/
Assessment**

UNICEF also works to build a more protective environment for children by providing psychosocial assistance for children who have been traumatized, landmine education, and HIV/AIDS prevention. It works with governments to ensure that children are not used by the armed forces, and that basic services reach those who are most vulnerable.

Martha's Story focuses on a 15-year-old girl from Sierra Leone who is one of the many children in Sierra Leone who were affected by the recent civil war which lasted from 1991-2002 and left 50,000 people dead. Martha is currently working in a market and hoping to return to school.

Now many children who were unable to attend school during the war are returning, despite being over-age. This means there are fewer places in school for younger children. In fact:

- * Only 39% of girls and 43% of boys attend elementary school in Sierra Leone
- * Only 12% of girls and 14 % of boys go on to high school

With much of its infrastructure damaged by the war, Sierra Leone is one of the world's poorest countries—its yearly gross national income is only \$200 per person. It has the world's highest rate of child mortality—over 28% of children die before their fifth birthday.

Armed conflict in Sierra Leone has had a devastating impact on children:

- * Over 10,000 children were directly affected through family separation, random violence, sexual assault, and abduction into the fighting forces
- * Large numbers of schools were destroyed during the war

Students will be evaluated based on their:

- * Participation in class discussions and small group work
- * Ability to describe the links between armed conflict and civilians' rights issues such as health and education
- * Ability to identify key points when reading a text
- * Ability to consider what types of interventions are priorities at different stages of conflict
- * Ability to calculate and interpret statistics

Interdisciplinary Connections

Given that the unit *Martha's Story* aligns with the national guidelines for Mathematics, Language Arts, Geography and Health standards, you may want to team teach the unit with colleagues in those disciplines. Additional interdisciplinary assignments could include:

MATH: Use the statistical tables on education from *The State of the World's Children, 2006* report to develop a table similar to the one in Handout #6 for high school (secondary school) attendance rates. Statistics on education can be found at:

www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1.

Students can use the same nine countries as in Handout #6, and calculate the average high school attendance rate for these war-affected countries. Compare this average to the average for “least developed countries” as a whole. Does the impact of armed conflict on children appear to be greater, less, or about the same in terms of elementary and high school attendance?

LANGUAGE ARTS: Students can develop a set of interview questions on the experience of armed conflict. They then can interview someone in their community—a grandparent, parent, other family member, or community member—who can speak first-hand about their experience. The interview can be recorded and shared. Or the students can report their findings to the class as a whole.

GEOGRAPHY: Students can develop maps that show where major conflicts have taken place in the past 10 years. Why do they think that conflict is more common in certain parts of the world?

HEALTH: Students can learn about how immunizations work, and against what diseases children in the US are regularly immunized.

Service Learning Projects

Regardless of their range and scope, the best Service Learning projects are those developed and initiated by students themselves. They can last an afternoon, a weekend, a week, a month—depending on the goals students set. They can be done on an individual basis, or in pairs or small groups—in some cases, the project may be so big that an entire class or even school can get involved!

Some possible Service Learning projects for Martha's Story include:

1. HeART—Healing Art

Students partner with art teachers and a local child services group(s) to share art skills and materials with children affected by illness, loss of a parent, natural disasters, and other emergency situation.

2. Bedside Buddies

Students partner with children's health centers to tutor children who are out of school for an extended period of time due to illness, in an effort to help them stay current with their studies and provide a sense of normalcy.

3. Playing Catch(up)

Students tutor children who have been out of school for an extended period of time due to illness or emergency, and help them master the skills/content covered during their absence.

National Standards

All TeachUNICEF lesson plans are designed to be in line with national standards. For more detail, refer to the national standards section at the back of this lesson or to the additional resources at: www.teachunicef.org.

Martha's Story



Martha, Age: 16, Country: Sierra Leone

Lesson 1

War: Children's Views

TOTAL TIME: 45 Minutes

Objectives

To raise awareness of the range of ways in which armed conflict affects children; to encourage thinking about the long-term effects of armed conflict on children's lives.

Session Plan

- * OPENING ACTIVITY: 8 Minutes
- * MAKING CONNECTIONS: 13 Minutes
- * IMAGINING THE FUTURE: 15 Minutes
- * HOMEWORK: 9 Minutes

Vocabulary

- * Devastating
- * Landmines
- * Rebels
- * Stroke
- * Responsibilities

Tip!

Materials Needed

Teachers' Tip

Don't have a live Internet connection in your classroom? No problem! The video files can be downloaded onto a computer and then saved on a USB drive, or burned onto a DVD for viewing on a computer later.

Set Up

Opening Activity

Tip!

Teachers' Tip

Concerned that all 6 pictures may be overwhelming at this age? Limited in the number of copies you can make?

Set the class up into table groups of 4 or 5 students each, and give each group only 1 or 2 pictures to review.

Making Connections

- * Chalkboard/Newsprint/Whiteboard
- * Student copies of "Children's Drawings" (Handout #1)
- * World map
- * Computer with Internet access, connected to projector if possible
- * Student copies of "Martha's Video Guide" (Handout #2)
- * Student copies of "Martha's Story" (Handout #3)
- * Student copies of "Homework Handout" (Handout #4)

Pair students up in advance. List each pair on the board, with instructions for students to sit with their partner as they come in.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Distribute copies of Handout #1, "Children's Drawings." Ask the students to look at these drawings with a partner or in a group and discuss what they see. Then ask the class as a whole:

- * What do you think is the theme of these drawings?
- * How old do you think the children who drew these were?
- * Why do you think the children drew these pictures?

2. Explain that these are drawings done by children aged 7-12 in countries at war. Share with the class the fact that war is taking place in many parts of the world, and that 90% of the people who are affected by war are civilians, not members of the armed forces. About half of those civilians are children, whose lives are deeply affected by war.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Explain that this lesson will focus on the life of Martha, a 15-year-old girl who lived through the civil war in Sierra Leone from 1991-2002 as a rebel group tried to overthrow the government. Have the class locate Sierra Leone on map.

2. Distribute Handout #2, "Martha's Video Guide." Then have the class watch the video, and answer the questions on the Viewing Guide. Use the guide to build a foundation so students can explore the following questions:

- * How is Martha's life similar to yours? How is it different?
- * What are the things about Martha's life that seem to make her happy?
- * Why do you think it is so important to Martha to go to school?

Imagining the Future

DIRECTIONS:

1. Distribute Handout #3, “Martha’s Story.” After students have read the story and answered the questions, discuss their responses. Then ask:

- * How might the changes in Martha’s life that came about because of the war affect her in the future?
- * Of the UNICEF activities mentioned in the story, which ones do you think would be most important to Martha?

Further Questions for Discussion

- * Why do you think that war affects so many people who are not a part of the armed forces?

Homework

DIRECTIONS:

1. Distribute the “Homework Handout” (Handout #4).
2. Go over the homework assignment with the students.

Extension Activities

The following assignments can be given as part of an overall class-based research project. Or, they can be done as extra credit or make-up work.

- * Write an “inner monologue” about what might go through Martha’s mind as she works on the streets, cooks, and watches her friends and family members go to school. Or, create a graphic novel/comic or storyboard that explores the same events.
- * UNICEF bases all its work with governments on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (an international treaty on the rights of children), helping them create the laws and services that will help meet children’s rights. Read what the CRC says about children in armed conflict, especially:
 - Article 38—children under the age of 15 should not be part of armed forces.
 - Article 39—governments have the responsibility to help rehabilitate child soldiers.

You can find the full text and an abridged version of the CRC at:

www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1.

- * Hold a debate on what you think the minimum age for joining the armed forces should be:
 - Use examples from US history to illustrate your position
 - Read the “Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict” which was adopted in 2002. This is an addition to the Convention on the Rights of the Child that children under the age of 18 (rather than 15) should not be part of armed forces. Because it is optional, countries don’t have to agree to the this protocol.

Read more about the Optional Protocol at:

www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1.

Lesson 2

The Costs of Armed Conflict

TOTAL TIME: 45 Minutes

Objectives

Students will:

- * Use statistics to examine the impact of armed conflict on children in more depth
- * Explore the range of needs that children in armed conflict have
- * Discover how UNICEF assists war-affected children

Session Plan

- * OPENING ACTIVITY: 10 Minutes
- * ADDING IT UP: 10 Minutes
- * WORKING IT OUT: 25 Minutes

Vocabulary

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| * Child Mortality | * Munitions |
| * Immunization | * Rural |
| * Landmine | * Sanitation |
| * Malnutrition | * Taliban |
| * Measles | * Tetanus |
| * Militia | * Water Purification |

Materials Needed

- * Chalkboard/Newsprint/Whiteboard
- * Student copies of "Child Mortality and Armed Conflict" (Handout #5)
- * Student copies of "Elementary School Attendance Rates in Countries at War" (Handout #6)
- * Student copies of "UNICEF at Work in War-Affected Countries" (Handout #7)
- * World map

Tip!

Set Up

Teachers' Tip

To group or not to group? Base your decision on your students' needs and their potentially emotional response to the content being covered.

Decide in advance whether you want the students to continue working in groups or pairs, or if they'd do better working independently. If needed, establish the groups/pairs in advance, and list the members on the board.

Opening Activity

DIRECTIONS:

1. If students created timelines on Martha's life as homework, review these and discuss what life might be like for her if she is not able to go to school.

Adding It Up

Tip!

Teachers' Tip

UNICEF and other UN organizations and their partners refer to the "under five" mortality rate—the number or percentage of children who die before reaching their 5th birthday.

The graph shows the 12 countries in which 1 in 5 children die before reaching the age of five. It also shows which ones have experienced major armed conflict since 1999.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Explain that UNICEF uses statistics to help understand the effect of armed conflict on children.

- * Define the term "child mortality"
- * Give students a copy of Handout #5, "Child Mortality and Armed Conflict"

2. Ask students to discuss what this graph suggests about the impact of armed conflict on children. Possible responses include:

- * Children are more likely to die before 5 years of age in places where armed conflict is taking place
- * 75% of the countries where large numbers of children die before their 5th birthday are experiencing armed conflict
- * In some countries that are not experiencing armed conflict, many children still die before the age of 5

Why do they think this is so? Possible responses include:

- * Many children are killed, either accidentally or deliberately, by armed conflict
- * Children are recruited as soldiers
- * Armed conflict cuts off access to clean water and healthy food
- * Children and their families flee their homes, leaving important resources (food, water, money) behind
- * Children and their families, when seeking safety, overcrowd other locations like schools. Lack of good sanitation, clean water, and healthy food encourages the development of diseases in these settings
- * Schools and hospitals are targeted by opposing sides during times of armed conflict

3. Give out copies of Handout #6, "Elementary School Attendance Rates in Countries at War." Explain that this handout shows the percentage of children who actually go to elementary school in 9 war-affected countries.

- * Have half the class calculate the average attendance rate for boys in these 9 countries (Answer: 50.7%)
- * Have the other half of the class calculate the average attendance rate for girls (Answer: 44%)

Working It Out

Tip!

Teachers' Tip

Israel is not included on the list of countries in which UNICEF has programs. UNICEF was the first UN agency to go to Israel's aid after its independence in 1948, and provided instrumental child survival and development aid for the next 18 years. By 1966, Israel had achieved the goal of many developing countries: attaining the economic capacity to care for its own children. Israel then joined the U.S., Canada and other countries to become a donor nation to UNICEF. Israel continues its active support of UNICEF programs in the region and worldwide. During the war with Lebanon in July–August 2006, UNICEF supported groups that assisted Israeli children traumatized by the war.

Ask them to report on their numbers.

4. Share with the class that in the world's poorest countries that are not affected by war, 60% of boys go to school and 55% of girls go to school. Have the class discuss:

- * How do the average elementary school attendance rates compare for war-affected and non-war-affected countries?
- * Based on these statistics, what can you say about the effect of war on children's education?

DIRECTIONS:

1. Explain to the class that UNICEF is the UN agency that works to promote children's rights. It has offices in most of the world's developing countries. UNICEF develops projects, or works with other local organizations to develop projects, that improve children's health, nutrition, education, access to sanitation and clean water, and other basic rights.

2. Divide the class into small groups. Ask them to discuss:

- * If you worked for UNICEF and had to create programs to help children like Martha, what would those programs do?

Allow time for discussion.

3. Ask the groups to report on their priorities to the whole class.

4. Give out copies of Handout #5, "UNICEF at Work in War-Affected Countries." Ask each small group to read one of the short case studies on UNICEF's work in a country experiencing armed conflict. They can use the chart to make notes on the different kinds of programs that UNICEF supports when conflict first starts, after the conflict has been going on for a while, and after the conflict ends.

NOTE: The case studies include one on UNICEF's work in Lebanon during the July–August 2006 war. This may raise questions about UNICEF's role in the Middle East and North Africa region. UNICEF maintains an active presence in this politically complex part of the world. More information on UNICEF programs in this region can be found at: www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1.

When each group has finished their case study, have them report about what they found to the rest of the class (including showing where their country is on a world map). Discuss:

- * Were there different types of programs at the beginning, middle, or end of a conflict? If so, why?
- * Were there any types of programs that were common to all of the countries?

Further Questions for Discussion

Extension Activities

- * Were there types of programs that only happened in one country?
- * If so, what might be the reason for that?

- * UNICEF is increasingly starting education programs as early as possible during crisis situations. Why do you think this is the case?
- * What do you think needs to be done—by citizens, by governments, by the UN—to prevent conflicts from starting in the first place?

The following assignments can be given as part of an overall class-based research project. Or, they can be done as extra credit or make-up work.

- * Learn more about UNICEF's work in countries affected by armed conflict. Visit the UNICEF website to search for information by country at: <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/>. Use the links in Handout #7 to research these countries further. Other countries that have recently been in the news, and may be of interest to students, include:

Iraq: <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/iraq.html>

Sudan: <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/sudan.html>

West Bank and Gaza: <http://www.unicef.org/oPt/>

- * You have been asked to design a program that will help get students back to school quickly, during an emergency. You think "If only we had a School In A Box!" What would you put into the boxes? Read about UNICEF's "School in A Box" program at: www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1.

What was in UNICEF's box that was not in yours?

- * Visit UNICEF's *Voices of Youth* website at: www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1.

Focus on these three Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

- MDG 1: By 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people who live on less than \$1 per day.
- MDG 2: By 2015, make sure that all girls and boys complete elementary education.
- MDG 4: By 2015, reduce child mortality by two-thirds.

How would ending armed conflict help to achieve these goals?

Find out about UNICEF's work to educate children about landmines, and help children who have become disabled by landmines at: www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1.

Find out what UNICEF is doing to help children who serve as soldiers. Links to information about child soldiers can be found at: www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1.

Tip!

Teachers' Tip

Use the TeachUNICEF *Himal's Story* lesson plan to find out how armed conflict affected a boy in Nepal.

National Standards

The two lessons in this unit align with the following national guidelines for curriculum standards:

Geography—Grades K-12

THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS

As a result of activities in grades K-12, all students should

- * Understand how to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

PLACES AND REGIONS

As a result of their activities in grades K-12, all students should

- * Understand the physical and human characteristics of places.
- * Understand that people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity.
- * Understand how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

World History—Grades 5-12

THE 20TH CENTURY SINCE 1945: PROMISES AND PARADOXES

The student in grades 5-12 should understand

- * The search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world.

English Language Arts—Grades K-12

Standard 1: Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

Standard 2: Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

Standard 3: Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

Standard 4: Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Standard 6: Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

Standard 9: Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

Standard 12: Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Mathematics—Grades K-12

NUMBER AND OPERATIONS

Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates

- * select appropriate methods and tools for computing with fractions and decimals from among mental computation, estimation, calculators or computers, and paper and pencil, depending on the situation, and apply the selected methods;

DATA ANALYSIS & PROBABILITY

In grades 6-8 all students should

- * Formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer
- * Select and use appropriate statistical methods to analyze data
- * Develop and evaluate inferences and predictions that are based on data
- * Formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer

Science—Grades 5-8

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

As a result of activities in grades 5-8, all students should develop understanding

- * Personal health
- * Populations, resources, and environments
- * Natural hazards
- * Risks and benefits
- * Science and technology in society

Health—Grades 6-8

HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention

- * Explain the relationship between positive health behaviors and the prevention of injury, illness, disease, and premature death.
- * Describe the interrelationship of mental, emotional, social, and physical health during adolescence.
- * Explain how health is influenced by the interaction of body systems.
- * Describe how family and peers influence the health of adolescents.
- * Analyze how environment and personal health are interrelated.
- * Describe ways to reduce risks related to adolescent health problems.
- * Explain how appropriate health care can prevent premature death and disability.
- * Describe how lifestyle, pathogens, family history, and other risk factors are related to the cause or prevention of disease and other health problems.

REDUCING HEALTH RISKS

Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks—

- * Explain the importance of assuming responsibility for personal health behaviors.
- * Analyze a personal health assessment to determine health strengths and risks.
- * Distinguish between safe and risky or harmful behaviors in relationships.
- * Demonstrate strategies to improve or maintain personal and family health.
- * Develop injury prevention and management strategies for personal and family health.
- * Demonstrate ways to avoid and reduce threatening situations.
- * Demonstrate strategies to manage stress.



Martha, Age: 16, Country: Sierra Leone

Martha's Story

Handouts

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Handout #6	Page 28
Handout #7	Page 29

Children's Drawings

1



2



Source: Macksoud, Mona. *Helping Children Cope with the Stresses of War*, 2000, UNICEF New York.

Children's Drawings

3



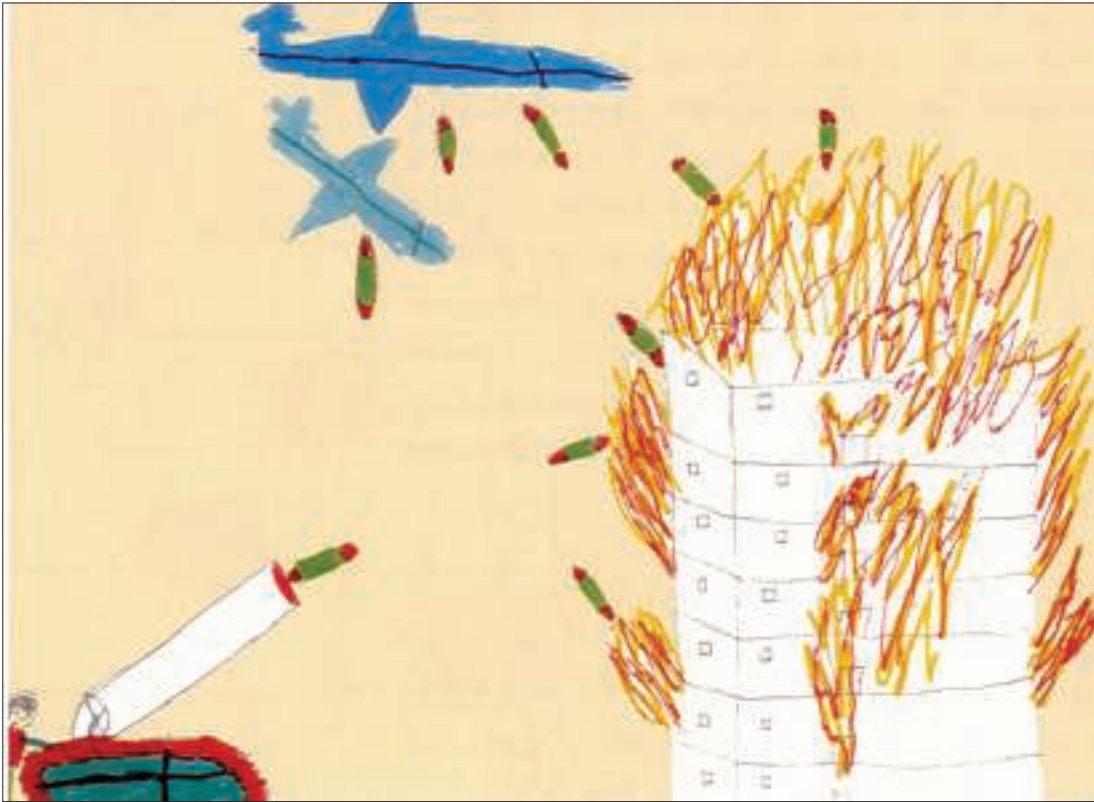
4



Source: Macksoud, Mona. *Helping Children Cope with the Stresses of War*, 2000, UNICEF New York.

Children's Drawings

5



6



Source: Macksoud, Mona. *Helping Children Cope with the Stresses of War*, 2000, UNICEF New York.

Martha's Video Guide

Martha is 15 and lives in Sierra Leone. She lives with her stepmother's family and works selling biscuits in the local market. Watch the video, then answer these questions:

1. Why is Martha an orphan?

2. Why doesn't Martha go to school?

3. Why does she have to work?

4. Describe the game that Martha plays after school.

.....

.....

.....

5. From watching the video, how do you think Martha feels about different parts of her life? Write down how you think she feels, and why, about:

Her family:

.....

.....

Her friends:

.....

.....

Her work:

.....

.....

Her free time:

.....

.....

School:

.....

.....

Martha's Story

As a young child in Sierra Leone, Martha was told that she looked like her mother, so she spent hours in front of the mirror, trying to see in her own features an image of the mother she lost as a toddler. Martha's father, a successful businessman, cared deeply for his daughter. He bought her new clothes every week and took her to school every morning.

In 2000, when Martha was eight years old, her village was attacked by members of a rebel group trying to overthrow the government. As the sound of gunfire filled the neighborhood, Martha and her father stayed locked inside their house for over a week, waiting for the fighting to stop.

When things quieted down, the village was occupied by rebels and the situation was tense. Martha's father saw his business drop off, and he was forced to move to a town he thought would be safe from rebel attack. There, he was able to rebuild his business and send money and clothes to his daughter.

With her father gone, Martha moved in with her grandmother, who made a living by selling vegetables in the market. Sometimes Martha had to help her and missed school as a result. Her life became even more difficult when her grandmother had a severe stroke, which left her unable to walk and almost unable to speak. Martha, by then 13 years old, found herself caring for her ill grandmother and had no news from her father.

Though Martha was barely able to keep up with school work, she managed to pass the National Primary School Examination, which allowed her to go on to high school. However, with her father gone and her grandmother no longer able to work, there was no money for the necessary school fees.

Martha's hopes for continuing her education now depended on her father, and she anxiously waited to hear from him. One morning, she received devastating news: her father had been murdered by the rebels. "The whole world stopped for me," says Martha. "For the first time in my life I felt alone. I realized I was an orphan."

Martha is now staying with her stepmother (a woman her father married before his death and who she refers to as 'aunty') and her stepmother's three children. To help her new family, Martha sells biscuits in the street market, but she longs to go back to school. Luckily, her stepmother's new husband has shown sympathy toward her and is willing to help.

Sierra Leone's civil war (from 1991–2002) affected over 10,000 children like Martha, causing separation from their families and exposing them to violence. Some were injured or killed by landmines. Others were forced to serve as child soldiers. Many more children missed out on schooling, and were often unable to get health care during the conflict.

UNICEF helps children like Martha by providing food, water, and medical supplies during times of conflict. It also helps children who are serving as child soldiers to leave armed groups and return to their families and communities. Where children have been separated from their families during conflict, UNICEF works to re-unite them. In addition, the organization provides counseling for children who need emotional help. For the many children who, like Martha, want to continue learning, UNICEF provides basic education so that children do not miss out on school during times of conflict.

1. Name at least three ways in which armed conflict has affected Martha's life.

a.

b.

c.

2. Martha has more responsibilities than most children of her age in the US—what are two of those responsibilities?

a.

b.

3. Armed conflict has other effects on children besides those Martha experienced. What are some of these effects mentioned in the story?

a.

b.

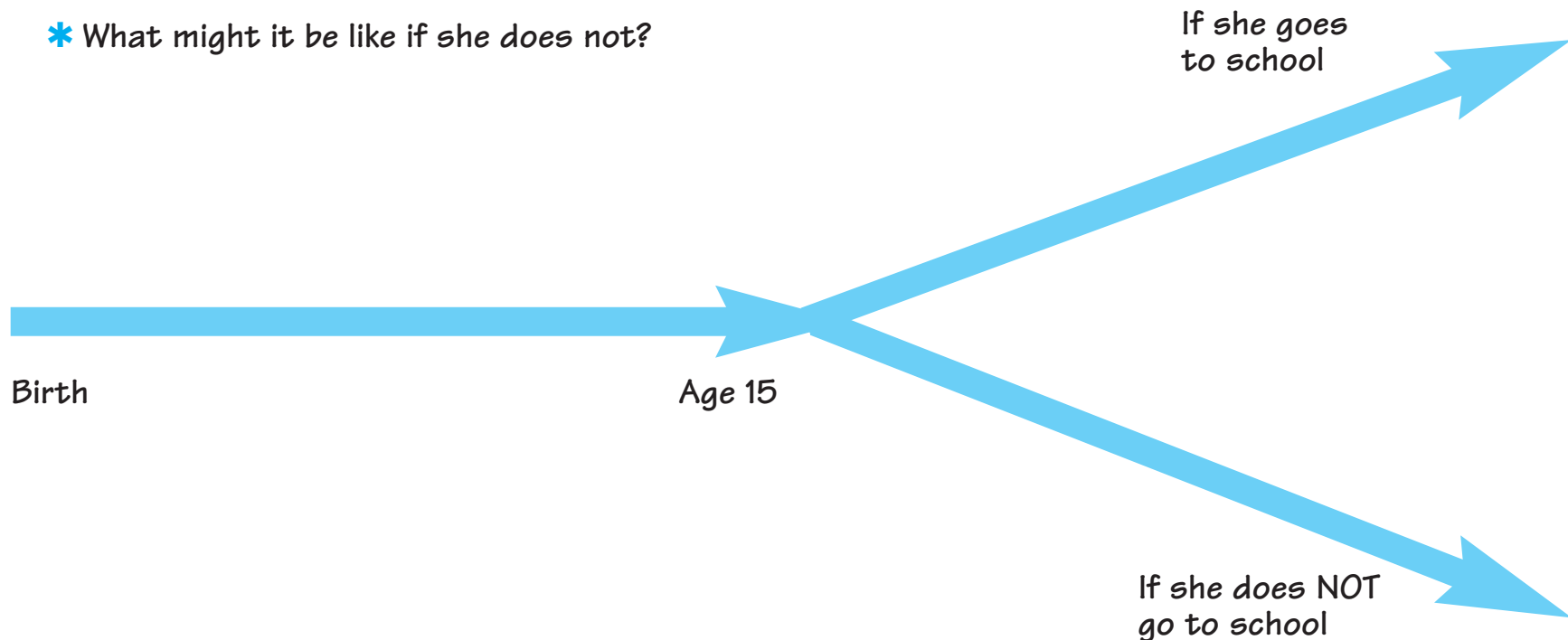
c.

Homework Handout

Directions:

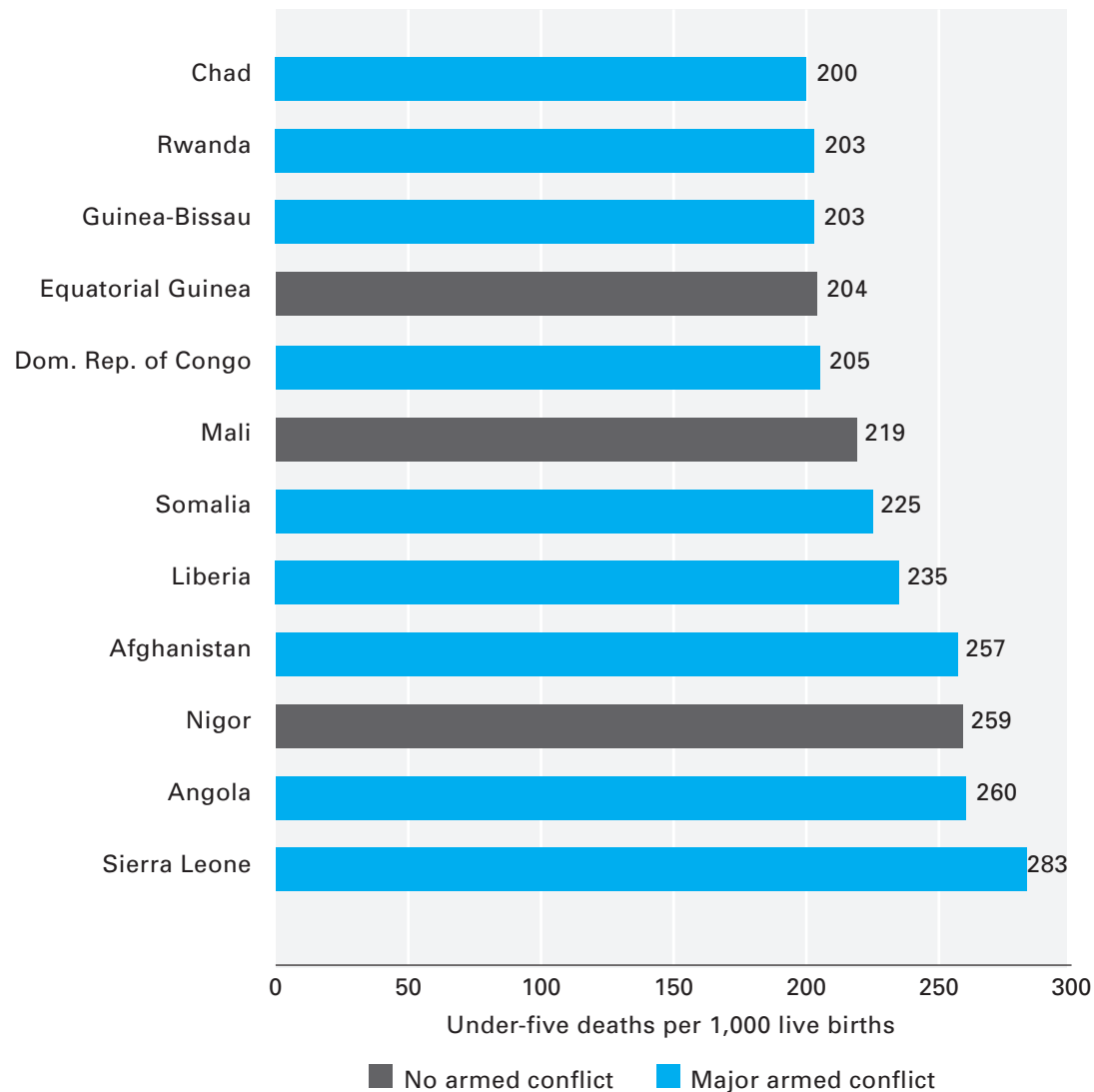
Based on your notes on the video and what you read in “Martha’s Story”:

1. Draw a timeline of key past events in Martha’s life.
2. Extend the timeline into the future:
 - * What might Martha’s life be like if she goes to school?
 - * What might it be like if she does not?



Child Mortality and Armed Conflict

Figure 2.3: Most of the countries where 1 in 5 children die before the age of five have experienced major armed conflict since 1999



Source: Data on Child Mortality: UNICEF, United Nations Population Division and United Nations Statistics Division; data on major armed conflicts: Stockholm International Research Institute SIPRI Yearbook 2005

From *The State of the World's Children, 2006*

www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1

Elementary School Attendance Rates in Countries at War (1999-2004)

Calculate the average elementary school attendance rate for boys and girls in these nine countries that have been affected by armed conflict. (These are all countries in which 20% or more of all children die before their fifth birthday.)

Country	Elementary School Attendance Rate: Boys	Elementary School Attendance Rate: Girls
Afghanistan	66%	40%
Angola	57%	59%
Chad	46%	33%
Democratic Republic of Congo	55%	49%
Guinea-Bissau	44%	38%
Liberia	59%	53%
Rwanda	75%	75%
Sierra Leone	43%	39%
Somalia	12%	10%

Average of all 9 countries

Source of statistics: *The State of the World's Children, 2006*
http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/pdfs/sowc06_table5.pdf

UNICEF at Work in War-Affected Countries

Afghanistan

War has gone on in Afghanistan for over 20 years. Following military action by the United States in 2001, a new government was formed. By 2002, 3 million children who had been out of school returned to classes. Of these, 30% were girls, who had not been allowed to go to school under the Taliban government. In 2007, about 6 million children were in school, and nearly 40% of them were girls.

But armed conflict continues. In August 2006, UNICEF reported an increasing number of attacks on schools, including one missile attack, 11 explosions, 50 school burnings, and 37 threats against schools and communities. Six children have died as a result of the violence. Schools are beginning to close, shutting out an estimated 100,000 children.

UNICEF is working with Afghanistan's religious and community leaders to raise awareness of the importance of education, especially for girls. When attacks on schools occur, UNICEF provides classroom tents, teaching materials, blackboards, chalk, and floor mats, in order to help schools open again as quickly as possible. It also works with the government on rebuilding schools, and is helping to train 50,000 teachers in all subjects, including landmine awareness.

Over 25% of children in Afghanistan die before the age of five. UNICEF is working to immunize more than 4 million children under the age of five against measles, a leading cause of death. It also aims to immunize 4.2 million women against tetanus, which kills mothers and babies during childbirth. UNICEF is setting up health clinics, and going door-to-door with immunizations in hard-to-reach parts of the country where travel is still dangerous because of armed conflict.

UNICEF is working with the government to help children orphaned by war. It is setting up day care centers, counseling, care homes for children without parents, educational opportunities, and job training.

For more information on UNICEF's work in Afghanistan, visit:

www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1

UNICEF at Work in War-Affected Countries

Colombia

Forty years of conflict between the government and militias have caused many problems for Colombia's children. Outside of cities, it is hard to get medical care and education. Three million people (75% of them women and children) have had to leave their homes because of violence in the past 15 years, and lack safe water, health care, and education. Despite a law that says children under age 18 cannot be part of the army, there are still 6,000 to 7,000 child soldiers in militias. Landmines are found not only in combat zones, but in school yards, near water sources, and on rural roads. Landmines kill at least three people in Colombia each day.

UNICEF and its partners have:

- * Provided emergency assistance—food, health kits, and shelter—to thousands of people who have had to leave their homes because of violence.
- * Helped to repair water and sanitation systems damaged by conflict, and set up water and sanitation systems in areas where people are living in camps.
- * Built schools in conflict-affected areas, giving thousands of out-of-school children the chance to continue their education.
- * Worked with child soldiers. After getting them out of the armed forces, UNICEF has provided sports and other programs to over 19,000 children who used to be soldiers, giving them a new way of life. UNICEF helps them get shelter, job training, education, health care, counseling, legal protection, and other services that help them re-join their communities.
- * Educated tens of thousands of children on how to avoid landmine-related injuries. UNICEF also helped disabled landmine survivors with education, job training, and other kinds of support needed to live in communities.
- * Trained hundreds of teachers and therapists to provide psychological support for over 15,000 children who have been emotionally harmed by violence.

For more information on UNICEF's work in Colombia, visit:

www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1

UNICEF at Work in War-Affected Countries

Lebanon

During the conflict between Israel and Lebanon in the summer of 2006, UNICEF worked to get supplies to war-affected Lebanese families. Supplies included health kits, mattresses, blankets, buckets, and soap. UNICEF provided bottled water and water purification kits because water and sanitation systems were damaged during the war. UNICEF is now working to set up large water tanks that will replace the use of bottled water.

UNICEF also provided essential medicines. It started an immunization campaign aimed at protecting children, many of them living in crowded shelters, from measles.

In addition, UNICEF provided games and sports equipment for children who had to leave their homes and were living in shelters, which offered little opportunities for play.

Following the cease-fire, it is estimated that up to 50 schools were destroyed and 300 were damaged. UNICEF is working to re-open damaged schools, providing supplies, teaching materials, and helping with the re-building. Children need not only education, but the feeling that life is getting back to normal, and school helps give them this feeling.

Counseling groups are being set up to help children deal with the stress of losing their homes or family members. These groups will provide sports, art, and other activities that will help children express their feelings, and identify children who may need extra counseling.

UNICEF is also working to inform adults and children about the danger of landmines and unexploded munitions.

For more information on UNICEF's work in Lebanon, visit:

www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1

UNICEF at Work in War-Affected Countries

Timor-Leste (formerly East Timor):

On 20 May 2002, Timor-Leste (or East Timor) became the world's newest country. This followed a long struggle for independence from Indonesia that damaged up to 70% of all buildings in the country. Health services were heavily damaged during the conflict, and many children in Timor-Leste suffer from malnutrition, and die at an early age. Immunization rates are low. At the time of independence, only 20% of people living outside of cities had safe water, and only 10% had good sanitation facilities. Nearly all schools needed repairs to both the latrines and water systems following the crisis.

Since independence, UNICEF has worked to increase immunization rates, improve nutrition, provide water and sanitation to villages and schools, and improve the quality of schools. However, in the summer of 2006, new conflict broke out. Many people in the capital city, Dili, left and are living in camps, where many children are malnourished.

UNICEF is providing food to children in camps who are malnourished. It is also providing water, water containers, and water purification tablets to camps.

In addition, emergency classes have been set up for children who had to leave school. UNICEF is providing support to schools in the country that are overcrowded because of children escaping Dili.

Music, dance and art activities have been planned in camps to help children cope with stress. Kits providing games and sports equipment give children something positive to do with their time.

For more information about UNICEF's work in Timor-Leste, visit:

www.unicefusa.org/teachunicef/Martha1

Name of country:		
What UNICEF did when conflict first started:	What UNICEF did later in the conflict:	What UNICEF did when the conflict was over: