

# The art of peace

## Teachers' notes

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Workshop outline for students aged 16 and over to increase awareness of conflict, understand how Christian Aid and its partners are helping communities to promote peace and rebuild after war, and recognise art as a powerful means of communication.

## Workshop outline

### Objectives

- To increase awareness of the consequences of violent conflict including its impact on development
- To develop an understanding that the imbalance of power is a core cause of conflict.

### Outcomes

- Students will have drawn conclusions on the consequences of conflict
- Students will have made deductions regarding the underlying cause of conflict
- Students will recognise art as a powerful means of communication
- Students will have critiqued and produced artwork
- Students will have the opportunity to plan and complete actions as a response to the workshop.

## Preparation/materials

You will need to set up the PowerPoint presentation before getting started, and prepare materials for the following activities:

**Activity 1:** newspapers, scissors, glue, sticky notes, large piece of paper/card.

**Activity 2:** Adriana film clip. (<http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/TeachersResources/secondary/art-of-peace.aspx>).

**Activity 3:** Conflict captions handouts.

**Activity 4:** poster paper, paints, markers, pens.

## Running the workshop

**Introduction** (5 mins)

### Declare a thumb war!

Ask students to get into pairs and declare a thumb war! If time, play best of three.

**Show slide one** of the PowerPoint presentation. The aims of the thumb war are to dominate and oppress your opponent. Violent conflict is essentially a power struggle with devastating consequences. Explain that this workshop will explore how conflict affects ordinary people and how organisations such as Christian Aid work with communities to rebuild their lives and promote peace and reconciliation after the war is over.

### Activity 1

**Conflict collage** (10 minutes)

Ask students to organise themselves into groups of four. Give each group newspapers, scissors, glue and sticky notes. Get each group to cut out one

instance of conflict they can find in the newspaper and to stick it on a large piece of paper/card in the centre of the room.

Discuss the criteria they used for selecting an article, how conflict can be defined and the different types of conflict displayed in the collage. Ask students to write the questions they may have about conflict on sticky notes and get them to stick these up on the collage (this will give an indication of the further work you can do on this topic).

Clarify that there are different types of conflict and that not all conflict is negative, eg '*arguing to find a solution together* for a world free from poverty'. This workshop is addressing some of the issues surrounding violent conflict, including how conflict affects development, why conflict occurs, what needs to change in order to prevent a reoccurrence.

### Activity 2

**Consequences of conflict** (5 mins)

**Show slide two** of the PowerPoint presentation and introduce the work of artist John Keane. John was the official British war artist during the Gulf War in 1991. (This might raise a few questions, eg why have a war artist?) His work has always been deeply concerned with conflict – military, political and social – in Britain and

around the world. In August 2006 he went to Angola with international development agency Christian Aid to visit some of the projects it supports and also to see the effects of the recent conflict on children and young people. Explain that his art from this visit is going to give an insight into the consequences, causes and solutions to conflict.

Ask students what they imagine war art to look like.

**Show slide three** of the image of the child running in the forest.

Ask students what they think this picture may be conveying about conflict. What might they have thought of this painting if they had not known the workshop theme? Ask students to suggest titles for this painting.

Display title and quote from Eduardo, (animated text on PowerPoint slide 3). Explain how children hid in the forests because they feared being taken captive by the soldiers and forced to fight.

Tell students that John Keane painted this picture in response to hearing Adriana's story. **Play film clip of Adriana.** Ask students for their thoughts, feelings and/or questions after watching Adriana's story.



How does her life compare to theirs at age 13 and now?

### Activity 3

#### Conflict captions (15 mins)

Ask students to get into groups, give each group the accompanying 'Art of peace' activity materials. Ask them to consider the paintings and produce a title and caption for each of them.

Using PowerPoint slides to show each of the images, ask students to explain the titles and captions they suggest.

Give John Keane's title and explain the details behind each image (see below) – this will paint a comprehensive overview of the consequences of 27 years of war in Angola.

#### Slide 4: Country

Angola is a country which has endured 40 years of almost continuous war, first for independence (1961-74) and shortly afterwards a vicious civil war (1975-2002).

Conflict completely shattered Angola's infrastructure – roads, bridges, schools and health clinics were destroyed. As aid workers, including Christian Aid partner organisations,



finally were able to reach parts of the country that had been cut off for years, they discovered scenes of total deprivation.

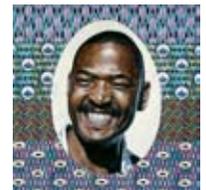
#### Slide 5: Brothers

Meet Luis and Amaral **Samacumbi**. When Luis (on left) was very young, his 14-year-old brother Amaral was kidnapped by National Union for the Total

Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebel soldiers and forced to become one of thousands of child soldiers. When Luis was 14 he too was captured, but by the opposing side, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government forces. In 2004 Luis and Amaral were reunited after almost 30 years.

During their reminiscences, the brothers realised they had both been present at the same battle at the same time but fighting on opposite sides, essentially fighting each other.

During the conflict, Amaral lost a leg after treading on a land mine, an incident that almost cost him his life. Both brothers carry huge emotional scars too. **'It was**



**very painful for me to find out I'd been fighting against my own brother in the civil war,'** says Luis. **'It's a terrible thing... I could have killed my own brother.'**

#### Slide 6: Mine

During the civil war, the area of Mavinga was heavily mined by UNITA forces attempting to halt the advance of the MPLA. Explosives were placed around medical centres, airstrips, buildings, rivers and fruit trees to prevent soldiers and civilians from reaching water and food. After the war ended, Angola was the most heavily mined country in the world. The number of landmines isn't known, but estimates vary from 500,000 to 6 million. The process of demining is huge, and Christian Aid partner IECA works with the Halo Trust to raise awareness through school and community workshops about avoiding the mines.



#### Slide 7: Arsenal

While he was in Angola, John met children such as Eduardo Chiwila, 12, who hadn't been able to go to school for years because his family were permanently on the run during the war. Eduardo says: **'Soldiers would chase us. One time we hid in the river to escape. I was so happy when the war finished because it meant we could leave the forest.'**



IECA is working with communities in Mavinga to build new schools. Eduardo has been helping to build his new school. **'I've been helping to carry sticks and grass for the roof,'** he says. **'It is great when everyone joins in because it speeds up the work. I'm proud to be involved in building my school.'**

#### Activity 4

**Causes of conflict** (20 minutes)

**Show slide 8.** Angola was a Portuguese colony and its fight for independence began when the coffee and cotton plantation workers rebelled in 1961. After gaining independence from Portugal in 1975, Angola was plunged into a devastating civil war between the government led by the MPLA and the rebel UNITA forces.

Why did Angola's conflicts occur? Why do any conflicts occur? Ask students to discuss this in their groups and to produce a poster/painting portraying what they regard as the principle causes of conflict.

Ask groups to display their poster/painting. Discuss as a large group.

Clarify that Angola's conflicts occurred as a result of an imbalance of power or a struggle for power. The people of Angola united against the external power structure imposed by Portugal and that kept the

people of Angola marginalised as plantation workers. Once Angola gained independence there was a struggle for who would assume the power gap left by the Portuguese. Emphasise that while this is a very simplified explanation of the conflict, most conflict is about power relations.

In February 2002 the rebel leader, Jonas Savimbi, was killed and a definitive peace accord was signed two months later. Angola is now at peace after more than four decades of war.

#### Activity 5 Peaceful prosperity?

(10 mins)

**Show slide 9:  
The Tree of Life.**

Ask students for comments, thoughts and feelings on this image. Ask them what they think it symbolises.



**Show slide 10.** Explain that The Tree of Life is made entirely from guns and weapons used in the Mozambique civil war. It was made by Mozambican artists working on a Christian Aid-supported project that exchanges weapons for equipment such as

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## Teachers' notes continued

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sewing machines, bicycles and building materials.

**Show slide 11.** Explain that this tank was used in the Angolan civil war.

Ask students the extent to which they think this image portrays a post-conflict society? (You may wish to draw attention to the broken bridge in the background since this relates to a later slide.)

Display the words of Rev Joseph Lowery, used in the benediction at the inauguration of Barack Obama in January 2009.

**'Help us then, now, Lord, to work for that day when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, when tanks will be beaten into tractors.'**

What does the phrase **'tanks into tractors'** suggest?

You may wish to explain this phrase is a paraphrase of the Old Testament prophets Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3 when they told of a time of peace when people would turn **'swords into ploughshares'**.

From the discussion, draw out the concept that if conflict hinders development, peace should promote it.

Ask why they think that, after seven years of peace, so many of Angola's people are still living in poverty?

**Show slide 12: Shanty.** Ask students if there is anything conveyed in this painting that would provide an answer to this question.

Describe how the pattern on the lady's skirt is made up not of traditional Angolan pictures, but of images of oil rigs. What message do students think John Keane is conveying?

Explain that Angola has a rich oil and mineral resource (oil provides half of its gross domestic product), but only a minority of the population benefits from this wealth. Seventy per cent of Angola's citizens live in abject poverty on less than US\$2 a day. One in four children dies before their fifth birthday.

Explain that this shanty town (called Cambamba II camp) is now home to several hundred families forcibly removed from their land when the government sent bulldozers to tear down their homes to make way for new apartment blocks – for the rich. Maxelina Manuel Sebastião, 15, describes



what happened when her home was demolished.

**'I was at home making lunch for my family when**

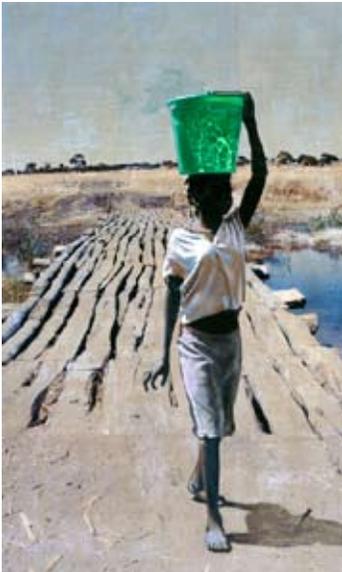
**I saw the police arrive with guns and dogs. The governor of the building project had sent the police and without any warning they tore my house down with a bulldozer. I was very frightened. I watched the police destroy lots of homes and a four-year-old boy got shot.'**

Conditions at Cambamba II are appalling and there is no running water or electricity.

**'Our house used to be made out of brick and had a tin roof, but now we live in a cold shelter made of rags,'**

Maxelina explains.

Christian Aid partner organisation SOS Habitat is working with these families to highlight their plight both nationally and internationally, and fight for their right to be rehoused. Its staff risked their lives to speak out against the government. **'SOS Habitat is here with us all the time and they encourage us. They say we have rights**



**because we are Angolans and we should be treated as such,'** says Maxelina.

**Show slide 13: Bridge.**

This painting summarises how far Angola has come and how far it still has to go.

Ask students to describe what they see.

Explain that Florinda, the girl in the painting, is crossing the bridge with a bucket provided as part of a starter kit given by Christian Aid partner IECA to families who have moved back to Angola after the war. The starter kit contained farming tools and blankets to help families who often returned to their homes with little more than the clothes on their backs, having lived in the forest or in refugee camps during the conflict.

The bridge symbolises the unity and progress that has been made in Angola. During the war, villages became politically divided by the river – MPLA forces occupied one side and UNITA forces the other. For 27 years there was no way to cross the river other than wading or swimming across. Christian Aid partner IECA provided villagers on either side of the river with tools and lunch for 12 months as they worked together to build the bridge. It is still owned and maintained by the villagers, and IECA

is continuing its work with the surrounding villages on peace and reconciliation projects.

However, the local community had to wait two months after finishing the bridge to officially open it. The villagers did not want to use the bridge they had built until the government had granted permission for them to do so. The government withheld this permission for some time in order to establish their own authority and control over the villagers. The government wanted to be included in every decision in Angola and felt they risked losing credibility because the bridge was planned and built by the villagers and not them, and they may have felt their authority and power was being undermined. By hesitating and creating the need for negotiations the government were attempting to reinstate the influence they felt they may have been lost.

The struggle for power displayed in this incident and the imbalance of power demonstrated previously in the forced movement of families to make way for apartment blocks could give rise to civil unrest within the country. With so many people still living in poverty in Angola, in spite of seven years of peace and the rich resource base, discontent among the 70 per cent of Angola's citizens who live in abject poverty would be understandable.

The government's unwillingness to give any power to its citizens threatens the country's peace.

**Summary**

(5 minutes)

**Display conflict collages** created at the beginning of the workshop.

Ask students what needs to happen for these articles to be replaced by stories of peace and progress.

**Show slide 14.** Ask students if they agree with what Gandhi said – what significance does this quote have in the context of what they have learnt about Angola.

There is hope for peace to remain in Angola and for things to get better. Luis Samacumbi, the former child soldier you met earlier in the workshop now runs the development department of Christian Aid partner the Angolan Congregational Church.

He looks to the future – **show slide 15.**

Before students leave the workshop invite them to find their thumb-war partner and shake hands as a symbol of equality and reconciliation.

All paintings by John Keane  
Photos Christian Aid/David Rose

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# Continuing the art of peace

## Additional activities

### Rebuilding after conflict

Christian Aid works in a number of post-conflict countries. Investigate the peace-building in other countries around the world and identify any key trends or patterns. What are the core components of peace? See

[www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/issues/conflict.aspx](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/issues/conflict.aspx)

### Effects of conflict

Students present Adriana's story as part of a school assembly on the theme of conflict and/or this could be written as an article for the school website to raise awareness of the millions of people affected by conflict around the world.

### Reconciliation

Students could take the theme of reconciliation as part of an art project (or ask for time in the art department) to produce a series of works (sculpt, paint, draw, mould) on the theme of conflict and reconciliation.

Be inspired by southern Sudan's 'Art of reconciliation' exhibition. See

[www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/eyewitness/sudan-reconciliation-gallery.aspx](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/eyewitness/sudan-reconciliation-gallery.aspx)

This exhibition could be used as a lunchtime/open day fundraiser to raise money for Christian Aid's work with poor communities around the world.

### Restoration

The problem of power imbalance is not unique to Angola and it threatens the restoration and progress of many countries.

Find out more about the rights and justice issues that are being challenged by Christian Aid partners across the world. This could be used as the basis of a class discussion/workshop on human rights and global citizenship.

[www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/issues/rights-and-justice.aspx](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/whatwedo/issues/rights-and-justice.aspx)

More Christian Aid resources on the theme of peace can be found at

[http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/TeachersResources/secondary/peace\\_KS4\\_S2.aspx](http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/TeachersResources/secondary/peace_KS4_S2.aspx)