

Football: a game of life and death?

This resource looks at the recent conflict in Burundi and examines the conflict resolution work that is attempting to re-establish peace and trust. A lot of the work involves young people, and sporting competitions, particularly football, are used to encourage young people to participate. Case studies also look at how football has been used in HIV education programmes in Kenya. This resource is designed to cover parts of the National Curriculum for citizenship and can be used in PE lessons.

Conflict in Burundi

Burundi is a small, densely populated country in central Africa. It has a history of conflict exacerbated by colonialism, first by the Germans and later by the Belgians. Since gaining independence in 1962, tensions between the Hutu majority and the Tutsi minority have boiled over on numerous occasions, leading to the death and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.

Tutsis were the more powerful group in Burundi from the 1400s until 1993, when democratic elections were held and a Hutu majority government was elected. However, peace was short lived- a military coup soon followed and the president and several government ministers were assassinated. In the chaos that followed, thousands of people were massacred and society became more divided than ever before.

Since 1993, attempts at peaceful government have been beset with problems. In 1994, President Ntaryamira was chosen as part of a compromise deal between the government and the opposition, but he was killed soon afterwards- along with the President of Rwanda- when their plane was shot down. This killing sparked genocide in Rwanda, and refuelled tensions in Burundi, although war was not actually declared.

Then, in 1996, Pierre Buyoya, a former Tutsi president, carried out a successful coup and took over the country with the support of the army. This led to regional sanctions and an international embargo which left Burundi isolated. International peace talks were seen as the only way forward, bearing in mind that in the years between 1993 and 1999, several thousand people lost their lives, 600,000 people were internally displaced, and 700,000 refugees were forced to flee to Rwanda, Congo and Tanzania.

Today peace is slowly returning to Burundi and, since 1999, Nelson Mandela has been acting as mediator in

peace talks. Despite the continuing civil conflict in some parts of the country, progress made towards a peace settlement - together with the virtual suspension of the embargo in January 1999 - offer some hope for the future.

Peace-building and conflict resolution work

ActionAid is working with people to understand their needs, build opportunities and empower them for peace-building within communities. Work tries to develop mechanisms to sustain peace in order to rebuild lives and livelihoods, and to identify problems and resolve issues locally to prevent conflict from re-emerging. Fundamental to peace-building is the need to rebuild trust and social relations, by encouraging different ethnic groups to live and work together in the spirit of reconciliation.

ActionAid 's work is focused on:

1 Re-establishing traditional authority

Many societies have institutions that were traditionally responsible for settling disputes, but their function has been eroded, corrupted and sometimes destroyed by conflict. ActionAid is working to rebuild the power of institutions such as the Bashingantahe, a council of Elders in Burundi.

2 Young people and education

Worldwide, young people are increasingly being recruited into militias where they learn to fight and kill and are exposed to drugs, robbery and diseases. When they return to their villages, many young fighters suffer frustration and mental breakdown, and many girls are traumatised by rape and unwanted pregnancies. Young people have often missed years of education and have few professional skills and so face limited choices. Disaffected young people can easily return to violence or be recruited back into fighting forces. ActionAid is working to rebuild schools, introduce trauma counselling and develop a peace curriculum to help pupils understand causes of conflict

and how to build peace. Skills training gives young people other options than returning to fighting, and sports and recreation programmes help to rebuild understanding and encourage co-operation.

3 Women and men, old and young

Women are increasingly targeted in modern warfare and suffer in conflict through personal attacks, the loss of spouses or relatives and the disintegration of social networks and support mechanisms. Women and young people are often integral to resolving conflicts and acting as catalysts for change in communities. While there is often resistance to changing women's roles, ActionAid is working with communities and leaders to raise awareness of the roles of men and women, recognise marginalised groups and ensure people have the strength, confidence, vision and skills they need to work for positive change.

4 The importance of communication

Conflict thrives on inaccurate information, misunderstanding and rumour. In order to overcome this it is important that people interact through the exchange of positive messages and development of a common understanding.

HIV/ AIDS statistics

HIV is considered to be a global pandemic. It was first identified in the 1980s and has since been reported in every country in the world. Over 53 million people have contracted HIV since then and 18.8 million have died of AIDS. Over 40 million people are now living with HIV/ AIDS, 71% of them in sub-Saharan Africa.

More than a third of the people living with HIV/ AIDS, and 58% of those infected in 2001, are under 25. Every 15 seconds a young adult (aged 15-24) is infected with HIV. There are over 13 million children worldwide who have been orphaned because of AIDS, 90% of them in sub-Saharan Africa.

In Kenya, an estimated 2.5 million people are living with HIV/ AIDS and 15% of the adult population are thought to be infected. There were 190,000 deaths due to AIDS in 2001 and 890,000 children have been orphaned by the disease.

ActionAid and HIV/ AIDS

ActionAid has 15 years of experience in international HIV/ AIDS work and believes that communities facing HIV/ AIDS can find their own solutions if the world offers the right support. ActionAid therefore works to encourage and support local innovation and action, and

assists local groups in 13 countries. Our vision is a world without AIDS in which every person can exercise and realise their right to a life of dignity.

Resources note

More information about HIV/ AIDS can be found in another briefing in this series. Some of the Burundi information and activities in this resource are taken from ActionAid's 'Who decides: citizenship through geography.' This is an active global citizenship resource that can be used in citizenship and geography lessons. There are many activities designed to develop understanding and advance student's processes of thinking to prepare them for being active citizens. One section looks at conflict and peace-building in Burundi and the other looks at HIV/ AIDS in Uganda. More information about football, including details about racism in British football, can be found at www.dep.org.uk/globalexpress/9/page1.htm

Football: a game of life and death?

Football is played in at least 178 countries and is the most popular game in the world. But football is not just a game, it also brings people together who have been torn apart by conflict or the impact of HIV/ AIDS. This paper will look at how football is being used to build peace in Burundi. It will also look at how football is used in youth projects in Kenya to promote girls' rights and HIV education.

Burundi

Brainstorm – write conflict in the centre of a piece of paper and brainstorm words that come to mind. Try to make links between the words.
List – the reasons why fights happen in your school. Which of these reasons can be easily solved and which are harder. What can you, or your class, do to help?
Discuss – is conflict always bad?

Conflict in Burundi

Burundi is a small country in central Africa. Burundi was colonised by both the Germans and the Belgians but gained independence in 1962. The country has experienced conflict on numerous occasions, leading to hundreds of thousands of people dying or losing their homes.

A lot of the conflicts are due to problems between two ethnic groups, the Tutsi and Hutu. The Hutus make up most of the population but the Tutsis have traditionally held the most power. In 1993 a Hutu government was elected, but army rebels objected to this and took over the country during a military coup. In 1994, a new president was chosen as part of a deal to achieve peace, but rebels again objected and he was soon killed. Another coup occurred in 1996 and a former Tutsi president took over the country. Each change of government and coup has caused fighting, leading to incredible numbers of people dying, being injured or losing their homes.

Working for peace

After so many years of conflict, peace is gradually returning to Burundi. The challenge now is to help people rebuild their lives and move on, so that peace will last. ActionAid is helping people find ways of building peace within communities. Councils are being set up to sort out disagreements and solve problems. A lot of the work is focusing on groups that have less power, such as women and children.

You probably know how rumours can end up spreading information that isn't true, and this can lead to conflict. It's really important that people learn to trust each other again, and so ActionAid is developing methods of communication that work. Groups are encouraged to make videos showing messages of peace and examples of peace-building work. These videos are then played in neighbouring villages and they help to break down misunderstandings. Success stories are published in a newsletter called *Ejo* ('yesterday and tomorrow') and colourful posters display peace messages.

Play – a game of Chinese whispers. Can you see how easy it is for messages to get messed up when people don't communicate properly?
Listen – take it in turns to spend an hour not speaking. Really listen to what other people are saying. Do you listen better when you are not thinking about what to say next?
Set up – a class, year or school council to resolve disagreements before they become big problems.

Young people, conflict and sorting things out

Young people were both fighters and victims in Burundi, and most saw someone killed in the war. Worldwide, young people are increasingly being used to fight and kill, and are exposed to drugs, robbery and diseases. When they return to their villages, some young fighters find it hard to fit back in. Many have missed years of education and have few skills, so find it hard to make a living. These young people need to be given opportunities to work, train or study, or they might end up going back to violence. ActionAid is working to rebuild schools, and is introducing trauma counselling and peace education into the school curriculum.

Playing for peace

Sports and leisure programmes can be used to help different groups get to know each other and break

down barriers. Dance and football competitions have brought together over 4,000 young people in Burundi and, in 2000, over 100 football, volleyball, dance and drama competitions took place in Ruyigi province alone. ActionAid has been organising inter-schools football competitions where children from different ethnic groups play side by side. Ugles Mede, 8, the baby of the team that won in 2000, played a blinder of a final game and struck the winning penalty. "We spent two days living with children from different ethnic backgrounds. We had lots of fun and learnt there is no need for us to be afraid of each other." After the competition, the minister of education in Burundi said, "football competitions like this should be held all over the country to encourage peace and communication."



Arrange – a football match against another group (class, school etc). After the match make an effort to talk to the other team and find out more about them.

Act – design a poster or set up a display in the PE department to tell other pupils how football is being used for peace.

Kenya

A place for girls in Mathare

ActionAid works with the Mathare youth sports club in the Nairobi slums. This club was set up in 1987 to give boys something to do and encourage them to clean up the local environment. The founder, Bob Munro, was convinced that young people in the slums had a lot of potential and that most of them were not into crime or drugs, despite what people often thought. Young people were encouraged to take a leadership role in the club. In 1992, the club started to let girls in and the girls themselves were responsible for making this happen.

"Hi! My name is Sarah. I'm 14 and I'm a member of the Mathare youth sports club in Nairobi. I joined the club when I was nine years old and today it is the largest youth football club in Africa. Our motto is 'Giving youth a sporting chance.'

I wanted to join the club when I was seven, but I couldn't. Girls weren't allowed to join the club because football was seen as a boy's game. I have many female friends who also love football, so we decided to find some solutions to the problem. Our first solution was to tell the Mathare youth sports club how we felt and that girls would like to be members. Our second solution was to organise girls' football matches. The boys laughed at the idea. Some of them felt that football was a boy's game and girls were needed to work at home.

Eventually the Mathare youth sports club listened to us. Our third solution was to encourage them to set up a three-year programme to improve girls' football skills. To our surprise they agreed to do this. Four experienced boys trained us and helped organise girls' football teams. After a short time we were playing in mixed teams with the boys and now I train some of the younger girls and boys. I was recently a defender in the quarter finals of the world's largest international youth football tournament."

Peter Sherry, the co-ordinator of the Mathare youth sports club said, "boys are coming to have more respect for the girls, and the girls are becoming more self-confident."

Discuss – is there such a thing as a girl's/boy's sport? Why do you think this? Should girls play football at school? Should boys play netball?
Record – the types of work you do at home over a week and how much time you spend working. Do boys and girls do different types of work? Who does the most?
Decide – on an issue in your school or community that you feel strongly about.
Act - plan ways of acting on this issue then put your plan into action.

In 1994, a boy in one of the teams died of AIDS. This shocked the players and staff at the club, and so it was decided to do something to inform young people about the risks of HIV. The top boys team were seen as heroes by the younger players, especially some of the girls, and so they decided to work as peer educators to tell younger players about HIV. Today there are over 50



boys and girls working as peer educators and over 8,500 club members.

Kicking off in Kicoshep

ActionAid also funds the Kicoshep programme in the slums of Nairobi. This helps children who are affected or orphaned by HIV/ AIDS. Children can attend the Kicoshep school and their sick parents get help at home. Thirty young people have also been trained as peer counsellors. Kicoshep arranges football games, and the young counsellors talk with participants during breaks.

I joined the Kicoshep school in 1997 when my mum died. My favourite sport is football. I play after school with my friends and neighbours in a nearby field. I like to play the no. 8 position – winger on the left side. If there is no football, we play hide and seek. We also like to discuss things that we learn at school such as HIV/ AIDS.

Evans Ouma, 13

I talk with my friends about how we can protect ourselves from HIV/ AIDS. I really enjoy playing football. My favourite position is goalkeeper.

Claris Akinyi, 14



Check – that you know the facts about HIV/ AIDS. Have a look at the HIV fact sheet in this series or check out www.avert.org if you are not sure. Act – tell someone else what you find out.

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