

# Peace by Proxy?

*The impact of the Life-Link program in Jordan and its possible expansion*

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# Executive Summary

This Minor Field Study Report analyses the impact of the Life-Link program in Jordan and attempts to explain the possibilities of education's possibilities for fostering peaceful relations. Combining intercultural pedagogic, reconciliation, and conflict resolution literature there is a link between popular support for peace and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. The report finds that Peace-by-Proxy is a good way of approaching youth for such support. It argues that the promotion of active decision making; enticement to feel connection; and the need for parental/teacher compliance are key issues to the success of Life-Link and similar programs. For post- and pre-conflict situations it is claimed that the question of ownership poses a dilemma which has to be contextually settled. Lessons learned is the importance of practical actions for engagement; that engagement seems to have a built-in spread effect to other areas; and that a feeling of belonging and a possibility of making a positive change are important for students in difficult situations.

## Recommendations for the Life-Link program

- **The Program:** Practical actions seem to have a strong effect on the students. It is thus recommended that this aspect could be even more developed. The water bill activity could be complemented with other similar exercises where the students also get a first hand receipt on the impact of their efforts.
  - *Engagement:* Focus on broader inclusion by involving boys' schools into the program
  - *Execution:* Develop further practical actions similar to the Water Bill action and research the possibility of inclusion in the national syllabus.
  - *Expansion:* Focus on output for students by expanding the possibilities for them to become spokespersons, both locally and through the web.
  - *Incentives:* Personal relation to the topics is very important; why any expansion to new areas should be taken in close cooperation with the receiving end.
- **A future in a jungle of initiatives:** As an unique part in the programs for Jordanian youth it is important that Life-Link upholds its presence and perhaps looks further at how it could create a "self-sustaining" presence in the country.
- **Life-Link Spirit?:** It is recommended that Life-Link expands cooperation with the receiving end, collaborating with UNESCO, the UNESCO Commission, the schools, by engaging other CSOs in Jordan. Benefits of such an arrangement would be that students are able to continue their engagement and work as spokespersons for Life-Link in other CSOs even after they have left the school while Life-Link can continue to focus its resources on issues relating to the students.

## Recommendations for Post-conflict education

- **Ownership:** In order to keep the level of ownership at the receiving end it is recommended that the apolitical nature of the program is kept. Extensive ownership allows for sensitivity to what issues are important on the ground while running the risk of abuse if dealt with improperly. Preventing a situation where the children are put at risk is of great importance. It is important to keep the topics of discussion away from very political, or by other means, sensitive topics. If not, the risk is that the children become tools for the conflict.
- **Peace by Proxy:** Within this concept is found not only the positive implications that have been seen in the schools that saw more caring attitudes between the students but also reassuring feelings of control. Students in the school for refugees were described to be very happy with the ability of working on something positive and something that may take their mind off the negative aspects of their situation. In this respect it is clear that the Life-Link program, not the least the *Water for Life* part, has had a positive impact. The ability of the students to get feedback through the water bill, the assuring feeling of being a part of something and possible to make a change in the situation, and sense of belonging to a greater cause is of great importance.

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# Introduction

Fostering a sustained, or durable, peace is not only the mission of political resolution of conflicts within or between nations. In order for an agreement of peace to last it is also necessary to get an agreement on this from all levels of society (Putnam, 1988). Achieving what could be termed a “constituency of peace” refers to the peace proneness of the lower levels of society. The chances for achieving this could, according to the reconciliation literature, be increased through awareness building (Staub, 2003). With this point of departure, this minor field study (MFS) investigates awareness building projects in schools in Jordan. In particular one project, the Life-Link programs a *Culture of Care* and *Water for Life*, serves as one possible approach to awareness building.

On a more practical point of departure, the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA) perceives education as one of the important issues in their policies for development. Inspired by the Dakar Framework “Education for All” SIDA sees its role as threefold; provide funding, to be a partner in dialogue, and support capacity development (SIDA, 2003). It is thus of importance also for the Swedish development work to understand more about what impact and possibilities of education in relation to the prospects of peace.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this Minor Field Study report is not only to investigate how the Life-Link program has been received and implemented in Jordan. It also aims at looking at the possible effects the program might have had and to investigate the possibility of similar programs in a post-conflict environment.

## **Research Question**

How does the Life-Link program work in Jordan and what obstacles are there for making the program sustainable over time?

## Background information on Life-Link

Life-Link Friendship-Schools Program, in short Life-Link, is an NGO based in Uppsala, Sweden, which was started in 1987. It was started as a response to the issues relating to the Cold War and the fear of the ever growing nuclear weapons arsenals (Life-Link, 2008a). In 2007 Life-Link and the UNESCO office in Amman, Jordan, launched a joint pilot project in six selected Arab countries. The pilot project was taking place under the so called UNESCO Associated School Project network (ASPnet) which has promoted teachers to look beyond the boundaries of school in order to promote a *Culture of Peace* (care) for more than 50 years (Life-Link, 2008b). The Life-Link program is active in more than 80 countries, with a total of 560 schools. It is within the pilot project that the schools in Jordan have been involved.

In Jordan the UNESCO commission at the Ministry of Education spread the information to the ASPnet schools in the country and those that were interested in taking part of the project were given further information (Shaheen, 2009-10-04). The information that the schools get is found in the booklets "Teacher's Guidelines", where one discusses the *Water for Life* project and the other the *Culture of Care* → *Culture for Peace*. The guidelines give concrete examples of actions that should be taken by the school, most of them to be discussed once a week for a period of 3-4 weeks. It also contains some evaluation material as well as material to use for the students to perform e.g. the home evaluation of water use where students analyze the cost of water in their homes before and after they try to decrease the use of water (Life-Link, 2007).

## Approach to the study

This study is approached from a few different disciplines of research. The multidisciplinary approach will start by introducing some of the more policy oriented writing on peace education and education in crisis and after conflict. The second section is diving deeper into the link between the topic and the literature on conflict resolution while the third part is a brief overview on SIDA recommendations. Combining these, the final subsection presents the analytical framework for the study.

### **Schools, conflict, and post-conflict**

The relationship between conflict and education is far from fully researched. There are nonetheless arguments for the education system to be both able to impede as well as prevent or increase the resolve for achieving peace (Davies, 2004). In the peace education programs that have been developed by agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNCHR which try to achieve a universal goal of a more peaceful world there has been said to be a 'western bias'. It is also claimed that there needs to be a more sensitive approach since there is an argued difference between the ways peace education should be applied in different countries, due to the different positions a country can be in. Mainly the difference is given to be for peace education taught in (1) regions with intractable, ongoing war, (2) regions of interethnic tensions, and (3) regions of experienced tranquillity (Seitz, 2004).

There are many problems relating to education and conflict. Roughly 100 million children in primary school age are not enrolled and that roughly half of those are estimated to live in areas directly or indirectly affected by violent conflict or war. Even though there are so many students affected, far from all countries are experiencing a 'total breakdown' and conflicts are often set to a certain part of the country. As well, the many countries that are experiencing a transition from violent conflict are a very important focus group for strengthening peace education in (Seitz, 2004).

The fairly common notion of 'peace education' is not the only type of education that has to do with peace and conflict. Education in schools has been known also to foster and strengthen conflicts around the world. In the Transvaal region of South Africa there was education in the 1960s on how to protect the society in the fear of a strong uprising against the white rule. Similarly there were reports in the ending of the war on Kosovo that Serbian schools had educated students in how to use booby traps and mines (Davies, 2004). Schools have also been known to be the grounds for recruiting child soldiers and support for military or militarized groups and goals. Schools are, in that sense, a

possible tool to use in conflict regions but may nonetheless also be a ground for the successful resolution of such.

Peace Education, as a comparison to the above mentioned education for war can be said to

*'refer[s] to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior changes 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 intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level'* (Seitz, 2004: 19).

What stands clear in this is that education can, and most likely will, affect or shape the students' attitudes, and understanding which in that extent also affects the behavior of individuals (Bush & Saltarelli, 2002). Mere education is thus not likely to bring about a change towards a more peaceful or reconciled society per se. This, in itself, stresses the importance for the inclusion of a larger awareness building (perhaps even pacifying in its positive sense) education to control not only the increased awareness of the students but also to prevent that schools are taken as hostage by those who would like to use it for the negative.

### **Relation to theories of conflict resolution**

Life-Link, and similar, programs attempt to work with awareness which possibly could change attitudes towards becoming more caring. This is not the least relevant since intra- or interstate conflicts, as well as intra- or intergroup conflicts, work in the opposite direction. Conflicts are often associated with the dehumanization of the 'other' (Jönsson, 2002). This has been known to be treated on the mid- to high levels through the use of problem-solving workshops which are able to work around the rigid political structures (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). For a greater conflict resolution or negotiation perspective this enables conciliatory initiatives (Pruitt, 2002) or costly signals, which is a good, perhaps even the best, way of changing opponent's perceptions (or humanization of the belligerent) and gain trust (Jönsson, 2002). Nonetheless, second-track diplomacy and similar initiatives are often, and preferably (Saunders, et al. 2000), made in secrecy and change in attitudes, as well as progress, are often not reflected in the rhetoric of the leadership (Donohue & Druckman, 2009). For a post-conflict scenario the process above described entails a series of dilemmas which are most likely necessary to deal with if a sustainable peace is to be achieved. One of these dilemmas relate to the possibility of constructing what could be called a 'constituency of peace'. In order to break, 're-humanize', or just strengthen the perception of others some work has been done in the fields of conflict resolution, social psychology, and intercultural pedagogic.

Contact between people from 'different' groups can often be hampered by the 'fundamental attribution error', the way in which we perceive 'others', by attributing negative abilities to their behaviour (Fischer, 2001). Dealing with issues related to this, as well as the finding of a shared history helps in breaking barriers between groups (Staub, 2006). One example comes from the field of Intercultural Pedagogic, which could deem fair seeing the focus on a school project for this proposal. Nonetheless, the theoretical assumptions within this field seem to depend on the proximity, or even participation, of the 'other group' (see e.g. Chamberlin-Quinlisk, 2005; Bekerman, 2005; Leeman, 2005). For instance, Bekerman (2005) focus on peace education in two bilingual (Arabic & Hebrew) schools in Israel. A challenging notion put forward by Bekerman is how much one can actually expect to get out (output) of such projects where all focus lies on the children. The effect of parents and teachers, as well as lack of 'real life' experience of intercultural interaction, arguing that though the school is clearly inhabited by people from both groups the level of voluntary interaction is practically absent (Bekerman, 2005). Another dilemma with this type of approach is that far from all situations where the perception of the 'other' needs to be strengthened are situations where there is daily, or even sporadic, interaction between different groups. It would thus be important to look at possibilities for strengthening the perceptions by mechanisms that do not involve or at least that do not necessitate the interaction between those whose attitudes are worked with. One possible solution for this is the work on awareness.

Awareness of one's behaviour and promotion of caring for others is argued to have an effect through promotion of making active decisions and use of self control. Through such understanding of beliefs, motives, and actions, violent behaviour can be decreased (Staub, 2003). Returning to the notion of parents and teachers it is very important that they are 'on track', or at least not working against these initiatives. It has been found that teachers that clearly take a stance against discrimination are able to affect students who then will act in a similar way (Leeman, 2005). Non-discriminatory behaviour is highly important since the devaluation of the 'others' strongly increases the ability of groups to interact or feel any sort of connection between each other (Staub, 2003).

When it comes to dealing with attitudes it has been found in other studies that the encouragement of people to attach personal value to their attitudes increases the chance that these attitudes will also change into actions reflecting the attitude desired (Boninger, et al., 1995). It is thus very important that any project working with attitudes achieve this if any positive attitudinal change is to be expected.

## SIDA Policy

As the research question states this report aims to analyse whether the Life-Link program works well, and if not what could be altered in order to make it better. Thus it is not only important to look at how it corresponds with relevant theories of schools in relation to peace and conflict and the work on conflict resolution. In order to commence as thorough analysis as possible it is also important to see how it corresponds with the wishes of the development aid policies. Since this is a Swedish based organization these policies will be represented by those of SIDA. Though it is understandable that an organization might not benefit the most from streamlining their activities and approach in order to receive money it is important to see what can be gained from the long experience and knowledge that SIDA has in the field of international development aid.

The cooperation between SIDA and independent NGO's is decided upon based on the "directives for support from the grant individual organizations" ("Anvisningar för bidrag från anslagsposten enskilda organisationer") (SIDA, 2007). The principals of cooperation are based on a combination of the goals of the development policy, a model of analysis, and the fundamental principles for cooperation (SIDA, 2007). Since the only aspect being examined in this report is the way in which the program is working in Jordan the organizational structure and the activities performed in Sweden will be left out. From this perspective the SIDA policy can be summarized as follows;

- To "assist in creating possibilities for poor people to increase their standards of living" (my interpretations) (SIDA, 2007: 5). Poverty is used in a multidimensional, dynamic, and dependent on context, poverty can thus be for e.g. political, economic or other reasons. Organizations shall be guided by the fundamental values of democracy, good governance, respect for human rights, equality between women and men. An emphasis is also placed on the importance of sustainable development, environmental, economic and social (SIDA, 2007).
- The work should take place within the civil society, i.e. be separate from the state and the market. It should, amongst other things, aim to increase the possibility of the receivers to voice their opinions. The project or program should be based on the perceived needs of those that are subjected to it, i.e. the receivers. It should work for diversity, respect and inclusiveness, link the global and local perspectives, be based on reciprocity and sustainability, dialogue and ownership of the local organization. The communication of the organization shall be objective and give concrete examples as well as giving a nuanced perception of the problems and possibilities of developing countries (SIDA: 2007).

## **Analytical Framework**

By combining the two sections above into a single construct will make it possible to evaluate and analyze the impact of the Life-Link project. To recap and clearly restate the issues of importance the expectations of a program working with peace education would be to:

- Promote the use of self control by making active decisions
- Entice the students' to attach personal value to the issues
- Not working against the ideas of teachers and parents

As a final comment which is necessary if it is to be in line with the policies of international aid it is necessary that the program:

- Be based on the principles of democracy, diversity, and equality
- Strive to achieve a high level of sustainability
- Be based on the needs of the receiving country with a level of ownership of the receivers

## Methodology

Many of the interviews have been arranged through cooperation with Life-Link, UNESCO, and the UNESCO Commission at the Jordanian Ministry of Education. Those schools that were visited within this contact have all been exposed to the Life-Link program. In order to get a broader basis for empirical analyses a number of schools and experts on the areas relating to the study have also been approached. This was done in order to get a reaction also from those that are not per definition involved and thus possibly decrease a bias that otherwise would exist in the empirics.

The selection of who to interview amongst those who, until now, have not been involved in the project came from the possibilities provided both by contacts in the country, considering the willingness of different schools, but also from a snowball effect where a number of meetings came as a result of new realizations from previous interviews. Basically it could be argued that the selection of the interviews was based on the previously listed factors that are assumed to have an effect on the outcome of the program, limited by the fact that there were no interviews made with parents of Life-Link engaged children. This shortcoming was attempted to be overcome by adding the issue of parents and family reactions to the program as an integral part of the interviews. Through such an approach it is at least possible to make inference on how the parents and family react in the eyes of the children as well as to the reactions that parents have given teachers at the schools that have been involved.

The general setting of the interviews had to be adjusted to suite the individual meetings since there was no guarantee at the start of any meeting that the head of the school would allow interaction with students. Since interviews with children may be particularly sensitive, not the least when touching upon some of the issues of the Life-Link program and since many of the schools were girls' only schools there were at least one teacher present at all interviews except for the first meeting (School J, 2009-09-07). In which way this has exactly affected the outcome of the interviews is hard to assess but in continuously assessing the "atmosphere" as well as the interaction between the students and their teachers it was at least possible to make some inference as to how "freely" the students felt that they could speak. In a certain amount of interviews it would also have been practically impossible since many of the questions had to be translated into Arabic in order for all of the students to understand. During the interviews that were arranged by the UNESCO Commission at the Ministry of Education there was always an official present who assisted in translation who could

also be assisting in order to recognize if the answer that was delivered by teachers was the same as the meaning of the child. Rather a result of language barriers, which were smaller than I had first assumed, this transformed into a number of discussions between the parties (translator, teacher, and students) on different responses. By, as far as possible, attempting to triangulate the responses made at one interview with responses from other interviews it is attempted to overcome any language discrepancies.

When it comes to the interviews in particular it was difficult in the beginning to really know which questions are sensitive and which are not. Following a set of main questions, similar to the list presented as possible interfering variables, by meeting with the principal and teachers before meeting with the students, as well as by asking to see presentations of the work the students had done in those schools that had participated it was possible to overcome most of the otherwise inappropriate questions that might have come.

Thus the actual interviews followed a semi-structured setting where mainly the overarching questions were touched upon while the actual questions were allowed rather to be an outcome of the setting than anything else. The order in which the questions were asked was altered in all interviews for two different reasons, first of all it allowed a much more relaxed approach where it was possible to let the interviewees to expand more on certain topics that came up but also opened a more familiar situation where it was hoped that all would be enticed to share their opinion and experience. Secondly the lack of structure was intended not to cause any systematic bias by following a specific route, e.g. not to always follow up questions on the *Water for Life* action which concerned asking their parents to look at the water bill (described more in detail later) with questions on how the parents reacted to the program at large or their involvement since such a discussion might be hampered by the focus of the previous question.

## Empirical findings

In the secondary school in Jordan, equivalent to high school, there are two main choices: private or public education. Many of the people that I met in Jordan experience some level of doubt on how well the public school system works. Two of the main arguments that have been made when questioning the way that the public schools are working concerns the way they perceive their role. The public schools have been argued to often be very grade focused and hence spend little time on the social concerns and education that the students might need (Principal School J, 2009-09-07). Secondly it is claimed that public schools often lack resources (School K, 2009-09-08; Dudin, 2009-09-10) especially when it comes to dealing with such a project as Life-Link. Scarce resources make it unlikely that a school will be able to devote what they have on extracurricular activities or in special activities class which many schools lack (School K, 2009-09-08). Nonetheless, most schools that have not yet been involved with the Life-Link program either says that they are working with similar issues but within the already established curricula or that they at least see the project as addressing important issues that should be considered.

The empirical findings are divided into two main categories below. The first section will discuss what is titled the Life-Link experience and thus covers mostly those interviews that were held with people who had been involved in the program. The second section refers to the interviews with those who had not been involved. The subsections have, as far as possible, been divided to cover the different aspects in the analytical framework.

### **The Life-Link experience**

Before the empirical observations start it is worth pointing out the choice of wording in relation to Life-Link. In the following subsections there will be references to the Life-Link programs or to a specific program, i.e. *Water for Life* or *Culture of Care*. When visiting the schools the discussion also took a heavier load on the *Water for Life* program since this was the program they had worked with most recently or still were working with. If nothing else is said any statement given thus refers to the execution of the Life-Link program in general.

### **The program**

The teachers' guides for both programs present some valuable examples for what to do and discuss with the students within the program. Most of the schools seem to have taken into regard what was suggested and as an example all of them shared with me the experience of one particular event with

special emphasis. The idea of the action is to reduce the use of water in the students' homes. In order to do so the students are handed a form where they on several occasions are told to ask their parents how much water is used in the house in a set time period by checking e.g. the water bill. While exposed to the program students are thus able to exam whether the family's use of water decreases over time. By doing so, not only are the students given a hands on confirmation that what they are taught to strive for is actually happening but the parents responsible for paying the bill also get confirmation on how much money they are saving each month by the reduction of water.

Besides this clearly tangible outcome of the program the students at many schools have also prepared power-point presentations on UNESCO, Life-Link, water scarcity, and other issues important to the problem. This means that the students perform research on the internet and are able to find out more information that situates what they are doing in a larger perspective. It is not uncommon that they teachers assist the students in their research and search on the web (School H, 2009-10-12). Though some presentations were made in English (e.g. School B, 2009-10-07) or both in English and Arabic (e.g. School G, 2009-10-11) some of them were also done in Arabic only (e.g. School A, 2009-10-07). There are clearly costs and benefits with both of them. Presentations in Arabic can be shared with the rest of the community as well as the rest of the students in school while presentations in English ensure their practice in the English language but also enables exchange of presentations between schools in non-Arabic speaking countries.

When it comes to the issues relating to the *Culture of Care* → *Culture of Peace* project there had been some different experiences in the different schools. Many of the schools seemed to have interpreted the use of the work culture which made their focus on the history of Jordan and Jordanian culture. Though this is still a part of the program there are several other issues that are meaningful to discuss in the program. Some of the perhaps most critical and toughest issues to deal with is the ones on sexual health as well as war and peace. Only at meetings two schools was I told that they had been working on issues like sexual education, often focusing on the problems with HIV and AIDS (Schools F, 2009-10-11; G, 2009-10-11).

In regards to violence and conflicts more schools had been engaged in debating the issues. Some described that they had dealt with issues on war relating it to the Palestinian issues and Iraq and described the discussion as "how to feel with those in the conflict" (ASPnet coordinator, School B, 2009-10-07). In another school the students had talked about it as recently as the war in Gaza in 2009 and together with the teacher they had engaged in trying to collect aid to send to those who were affected by the conflict (School H, 2009-09-12). When asking a regional ASPnet coordinator that was present during one of the school visits about if there was anything in particular that was difficult

to discuss he claimed that nothing in the Life-Link program was outside what was possible to discuss in an open society as Jordan (School E, 2009-10-10).

This runs a bit contrary to the experience in one particular school which is run by the UNRWA and holds students that are living in a refugee camp for Palestinian refugees. The teacher told me that if questions like war and peace were raised the discussion was immediately infected by statements relating to the students' own situation and the fact that their families, many of them living in the camp for decades, were still refugees. In her opinion it was also impossible to raise the discussion relating to other conflicts or conflicts in general since the reactions from the students then became, but why then are we still refugees? It was she told me, a reflection of that many students thought that they and the Palestinian people were seen by the surrounding world, in particular the western world, as being bad or evil people (School C, 2009-10-07). These thoughts from the students' side is far from healthy and will be discussed further later in relation to possible expansions of the project.

Other ways that the *Culture of Care* program had been executed at schools relate to discussions, lectures, and group research on e.g. Human Rights, Women's rights, Children's Rights, and similar topics (e.g. School B, 2009-10-07). The students had besides the previously discussed power-point presentations also made drama performances for the school on the topics, made caricatures and drawings about violence against women and children but also visited homes for the elderly and orphanages in the spirit of the *Culture of Care* towards others.

### ***Engagement***

Since all but two of the schools that had been involved in the Life-Link programs were strictly girls' schools there was a clear bias in who were involved. The two schools that had both boys and girls in their school had dealt with the issue in two different ways. The first of them (School F, 2009-10-11) was divided into one section for girls and one for boys. As a result the school has two different administrations and I was informed that only the girls section of the school had been involved with the programs. Thus, it was only at the final meeting with Life-Link associated schools that it was possible to get information from a school where also boys had been engaged (School I, 2009-10-14). This school has mixed classes and is a private school for students who have, and strive to, achieve "excellence" in their studies. More will be discussed later on about possible reasons and limits that this clear gender bias might have for the program but side-stepping that for a moment the reason for involvement and the selection of those who were involved is worth a comment.

From the National UNESCO Commission at the Ministry of Education the involvement of schools into the Life-Link program is totally voluntary. The schools are given the information about Life-Link through the ASPnet channels and then contact the Commission if they wish to participate. No

pressure is thus put on schools to get involved. In a scenario where there would be more schools willing to enroll in a given program than is possible the coordinator claimed that they prefer public schools "since they are generally less privileged and thus would need the assistance to a higher degree" (Shaheen, 2009-10-04).

Once the school has decided to enroll in the program the next step will be to decide which students that will partake in the experience since, as far as the schools that have been involved so far, not all students can be involved. In one of the schools the students from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade had been put into the program based on random selection (School I, 2009-10-14). In other schools it seemed as though students had the opportunity to select an extracurricular activity to be engaged in and thus it was the student who decided to engage (School G, 2009-10-11). In quite a few of the schools nonetheless they had tried to overcome the problem of only engaging some of the students by using the opportunity for students to later inform other students at the school about what they were doing with the Life-Link, spread the information they had gotten, as well as make plays on important issues like water scarcity for the other students at the school.

#### *Execution – problems of time and space*

Many of the schools expressed that there was a problem in the fact that most of the activities in the Life-Link program were extracurricular. This means that the students to a large degree have to perform the work outside of class. The Life-Link teachers' guide nonetheless states that part of the program should be tried to be intertwined into the curriculum so that not too much pressure is put on the students (Life-Link, 2007). Some of the schools had to different degrees taken up on this challenge and as an example discussed Human Rights issues in the English language class (School D, 2009-10-08) or by recycling paper (School F, 2009-10-11) or testing the quality of the drinking water in the science lab (School B, 2009-10-07). Another school claimed that they had not to any degree tried to make the Life-Link program a part of the regular curriculum (School G, 2009-10-11).

Lack of time outside the limits of the school day had made it difficult for them to think about the possibility of starting an interest group outside of school, something they were keen to get more information about the possibility of such a group from the Ministry of Education (School A, 2009-10-07).

The experience of how important it was to make the Life-Link program a part of the curriculum for the students differed from school to school. Even the students were disagreeing on how much an effort it was to be involved in a program besides the school. At one school, which was considered to be an elite school in the country, students had had to miss classes in order to be part in the Life-Link activities. After the activities they had to catch up on what they had missed which had led to

complaints from many, if not all, the students (School I, 2009-10-14). In other schools the students seemed so engaged in the project that they described how they used breaks and time right after school to discuss and work on projects (School A, 2009-10-07). In many schools it became clear nonetheless that teachers were doing what they could to assist the students in making it easier for them not to miss education and use the regular curriculum in order to execute the Life-Link programs as described in the previous paragraph.

One particular school made an impression to work with the Life-Link program in a bit of a different way which deserves some attention. The school (School G, 2009-10-11) did not include the Life-Link activities in the curriculum but had instead engaged in it through many of their practical activities that seemed to be somewhat of the backbone of the school. The school had a fairly big garden where the students grew some vegetables. Interlinking this with the *Water for Life* issues they had now built a small water reserve where the winter's rainwater was kept in order to have water for irrigation during the hot and dry summer months. They also grew mushrooms at the school and created different types of traditional Jordanian handicraft. Linking the activities to the *Culture of Care* program the school arranged it so that they sold the output of the agricultural and handicraft activities, spreading the profit amongst the many poor students at the school. This also meant that they had much discussion at the school on poverty and related problems in relation to care for others (School G, 2009-10-11). For some schools the expansion of the *Culture of Care* program also involved visits to orphanages and homes for the elderly (School F, 2009-10-11; 18).

The program has thus been executed in a number of different ways, not the least in what issues have been focused on as well as the apparent expansion of the program to touch upon locally important but related issues. The overall experience is that, no matter in what exact way the schools chose to execute the Life-Link program, there was a clear mark of having accepted a caring approach which is perhaps the backbone of the Life-Link program at large. There are some exceptions to this observation that have been and will be discussed further. However the presentations and meetings showed that there was no great difference if the engagement was in the *Culture of Care* → *Culture of Peace* or in the *Water for Life*. The caring part of the program had still been accepted together with a wish and will to engage in the problems. Perhaps the most important experience in relation to this is the expressed perception of many students that they themselves have the possibility to make a change through their own behavior and through contact with others in their communities.

### ***Expansion from within***

The Life-Link experience has not only stretched to those students who are directly involved with the program. Most schools have regular parent-teacher meetings when they discuss both school related

topics in general but also go through the programs and projects that the school is involved with. Parents have been confronting the engagement with Life-Link a bit differently at different school, stretching from the reaction that they totally agree with the project and perceive it to be valuable for the students (Schools B, 2009-10-07; C, 2009-10-07) to the more hesitant feelings in the beginning (School D, 2009-10-08) or that it is alright for the school to engage the students in this kind of project as long as the students do not suffer in their regular education (School F, 2009-10-11). In one school the teacher claimed that the parents were also engaged through the fact that students, whose English skills were not very good, took their evaluation sheets home as homework and were assisted by their parents in filling them out (School C, 2009-10-07). The parent-teacher meetings and occasional homework is nonetheless far from the only way that parents are confronted with the Life-Link project.

One experience that the students gain through their involvement in the program is the way they act outside the walls of the school. Not the least those students who have been involved with the *Water for Life* project take the issues with them to their house. As described above it may be through the examination of the water usage in the house but they also come home with practical ways on how to deal with the problem. On many occasions such actions were described. One student told about how she had asked her brothers not to use as much water when they wash themselves before prayer (School B, 2009-10-07)

In discussions with the schools the question of engaging the community at large to some degree has come up on several occasions but no direct actions have been taken within the Life-Link project in order to engage others. Nonetheless a number of schools (Schools B, 2009-10-07; C, 2009-10-07) have asked the municipality if they were allowed to have a cleaning day. After getting the permission they spent a full day cleaning the community around them. The reactions from those who saw them were at first hesitant but they also became walking advertisement posters since people asked what they were doing and when they were told most appreciated the effort they were doing to clean the community. The same school has also walked around the community spreading flyers on the importance of cautious water usage. Widening the place for action outside the walls of the school thus became an awareness raiser for many people in the community that had no other relation to the school and the issues they address in the extracurricular program (School B, 2009-10-07).

### *Incentives for the students*

The *Water for Life* project was for all of the schools the latest commitment that they had with the Life-Link program. Both students and teachers expressed that the program got a lot of appreciation from the students and one of the reasons for this is the reality of water scarcity in Jordan. Many of

the students live in situations where they often are reminded of the importance of not overusing water resources (School C, 2009-10-07). The feeling that water scarcity is an important problem in Jordan made students even more committed to the cause (School H, 2009-10-12). One teacher even expressed her amazement that people in Jordan are so wasteful with water, not the least seeing that there is also a passage in the Holy Koran which talks about the importance of not overusing the natural resources in order to save it also for the people around you and coming generations. In that particular school this had opened up for discussion on a Life-Link related topic also in the religion class (School A, 2009-10-07). This was nonetheless far from the only way that teachers had been able to entice the student to commit to the issues dealt with within the Life-Link program.

One school had started to give attendance credit to those students that are involved in Life-Link activities which made it easier for the students to come to schools also on some Saturdays. This had proved to be a great motivator at the school (School F, 2009-10-11). At another school student who participated well in extracurricular activities had been appreciated by the opportunity to attend field trips to locations such as Jerash or Petra (School G, 2009-10-11). Nonetheless, far from all schools have the possibility to finance such field trips and within the Life-Link program there are also other issues that are not of concrete concern to the Jordanian public at present which still needs to be taken into account if the Life-Link program is to be fully implemented. In relation to this many schools had thoughts on how to further develop the program and strengthen the incentives for students to be willing to spend time and effort on those issues.

At one school there was a suggestion of a membership into Life-Link as a sign of their commitment to the causes (School I, 2009-10-14). Such a membership would thus go further than the certificate of participation and would also entail the possibility of being committed to the organization even after the students leave the secondary school. This is not far related to the other issue that came up at many schools in relation to what students experience after their involvement.

One of the most common features when meeting students was there extremely strong wish to share with them the experience and knowledge they have received through the Life-Link program. Teachers told about how important it was for the students to see that someone from outside the school was interested in seeing what they had done, not the least when they have put down so much time and effort into the project (School A, 2009-10-07). Similarly, many students felt neglected when conferences were arranged in the country and those who had been the driving force in the program at the school were not invited to attend the conference to share their experience (School I, 2009-10-14).

On a similar topic many schools were interested in further strengthening some type of cooperation with other schools in the region, country or even abroad. Especially the international exchange came up at several occasions. The possibility to, physically or through technology, cooperate and exchange experiences and thoughts on Life-Link issues was shown by students (School F, 2009-10-11). Cross cultural exchanges with schools in the USA or in the European Union was clearly the main goal for some teachers as well (School I, 2009-10-14).

### **A Future in the Jungle of Initiatives?**

A clear obstacle that showed in relation to the Life-Link program, as well as for other initiatives, is that there are so many different projects ongoing at different points in time. The will to act for positive development of the education sector internationally through various programs seems sometimes overwhelming and many of the schools were taking part in several different programs. Concretely this meant that some schools abandoned their commitment to the Life-Link program, e.g. one school had not had any Life-Link event for two years (School I, 2009-10-14) and another claimed not to have been involved for the same amount of time, which then proved to be false for several reasons (School H, 2009-10-12). The former of the schools that had previously been involved saw no problem in taking the work up again with a new 10<sup>th</sup> grade class but were currently involved in a Danish project on environmental issues (School I, 2009-10-14). Many schools are currently involved in Twin projects with foreign schools where students exchange experiences with students in other countries (Schools A, 2009-10-07; B, 2009-10-07; C, 2009-10-07; E, 2009-10-10).

Apart from this there are also projects inside Jordan that present projects for the schools. Examples of these are the Madrasati initiative by HM Queen Rania and the nutrition program by HM King Abdullah II which schools work with as well (School E, 2009-10-10). Neither one of these projects is directly interfering with the topics of Life-Link (Shaheen, 2009-10-04) but e.g. the issues of the environment seems to have been part of programs that at least some schools were involved with already more than 10 years ago (School F, 2009-10-11). Currently there is no attempt for cooperation with e.g. the Madrasati initiative and UNESCO in order to streamline their work (UNESCO, 2009-09-09). Even though these initiatives touch on different aspects of the life of the students and the students' wellbeing there seems as though it is hard for the schools to be involved in many projects since that puts a strain on the rather scarce resources they already have (Schools A, 2009-10-07; F, 2009-10-11).

In some schools the directors and teachers involved told that they had enjoyed being involved in the program but that they were now awaiting new things from Life-Link to engage in (School A, 2009-10-07), or that they had had difficulties in contacting Life-Link (School H, 2009-10-12). But there are also

schools where the teachers had started discussing on how to take the Life-Link program further within their own school and community. One possibility discussed was the use of schools that have already been involved in order to function as ambassadors and for possibilities of consultation for 'new' schools adding onto the Life-Link network. Such an ambassadorial function would possibly be held in cooperation with the other schools in Jordan that have been involved (School I, 2009-10-14), which could possibly strengthen a bond between the already involved schools.

Already accomplished expansions involve the invitation of parents and guest researchers to the schools in order to tackle some of the issues where parents might have better expertise than some of the teachers. At one school the parents had also been invited to a guest lecture from a doctor at the Ministry of Health who discussed the importance of giving students nutritious foods (School H, 2009-10-12). Another school had expanded the program also to include the problem of animal species that are on the verge of extinction in Jordan (School G, 2009-10-11), and even another one had started to collect clothes in order to give them away as charity to the poor as a part of the *Culture of Care* (School A, 2009-10-07). Only one school mentioned that they were presently using the Life-Link web-page in order to see and learn from how other schools had executed their actions in order to find new ideas and input about how to go further with the program (School B, 2009-10-07).

### **A Life-Link Spirit?**

One of the main issues that lie at hand is whether or not there is a change or at least a presence of some type of Life-Link spirit in the schools that have been involved with the program. The meaning is somewhat an answer to questions relating to both the durability of the project as well as a transformation into the so called *Culture of Care* which the Life-Link program strives to achieve.

An example of this Life-Link spirit is what was seen at one school which clearly stated in the beginning that they had had no Life-Link activity during the last or this school year. The school showed interesting information about previous activities. During the interviews, the students showed not only a very strong belief in the program but also what seemed as a burning desire to share with others what they had been taught. This relates not the least from their experience with the *Water for Life* project. The strong engagement and expressed awareness of the issues, as well as their continuous references to how they, the students, had been approaching both parents and people on the street who they thought were overusing water to some degree, made it questionable if it was truly 18 months or more since their last engagement. On the direct question they thus had answered that they had had no activity but as it unfolded with follow-up questions it became apparent that they had been discussing issues relevant to the topics. Amongst the things they had done was discussing the problems that came with the war in Gaza earlier in 2009 and had even collected

charity that they could send to those who suffered from the war. It showed also that the students had still been “on guard” at water fountains in the school trying to make other students be more careful with the water usage and also continued to promote sober use of water in their home and to people on the street (School H, 2009-10-12). This is a good example of what could be called an achievement of the Life-Link spirit at a school where the work on the topics concerned is ongoing even though specific activities are not. The Life-Link program, to some degree, was described very well by one teacher who called it to be “a very good guide in order to be able to tackle [...] issues in school and raise the awareness in a good manner” which is already known by many but often otherwise neglected as a part of the education (ASPnet Coordinator School C, 2009-10-07). Another teacher, translating a statement made by one of the students, claimed that they “try to act as global citizens” (School B, 2009-10-07). It was on the mind also of other schools how to be able to alter the Life-Link program which is set in the teacher’s guide in order to make it ongoing and durable over time (School B, 2009-10-07).

But the experience has not only led to a feeling of responsibility and awareness to issues that occur outside of school, many schools described the activity of working together in group as very healthy for the students. At one school the teachers claimed that the students had started to learn and feel responsibility and care towards one another to a higher degree than before (School D, 2009-10-08). At the same time other schools told that the students were already so peaceful at the start of the project to it was hard to sense any real alteration in their behavior (School G, 2009-10-11). Be there a change or not, many teachers and principals were keen on presenting the students at their school as very peaceful and none of the schools claimed to have any problem with violence or bullying, at least not in comparison to what they perceived the situation to be in boys’ schools.

### **Those who have not been involved**

Meeting with schools, staff, politicians, and researchers that were presented with the ideas of the Life-Link program for the first time there are some similarities in their responses to the program. When it comes to the schools they were all, similarly to the schools that have been involved with the program, not seeing any problems in the school when it comes to violence (e.g. Schools J, 2009-09-07; L, 2009-09-17). Nonetheless it is argued that there is a growing problem with violence in schools and families in Jordan (Schteiwi, 2009-09-16). Whether or not it is the will to present the school in a more positive light, unawareness of some of the problems that might be present, or simply the case that none of the schools that were visited had any problem is hard to judge but when it comes to the non-Life-Link participating schools all of them were in the private sector. The implication that may be drawn from the fact that they are part of the private school system is that much of the conflicts that

are growing in the country are claimed to be of social, or even socio-economic background (Schteiwi, 2009-09-16), which is less likely to be found in schools where enrollment is dependent on a fair income of the parents. A second implication of this is also that there might be a problem relating to where the Life-Link program is implemented, not stating that those schools that have no issues with violence are bad places for implementation of this type of program but rather that there is a risk that it is not implemented in those schools where it is possibly most needed.

At a boys only school the meeting with the principal provided some important information regarding the previously discussed topic of a somewhat bias towards Life-Link being implemented mostly in girls only schools (School K, 2009-09-08). The principal showed much interest in the Life-Link program and claimed to see it as a very positive idea that would serve the school system in Jordan but also saw some direct problems with it. Not only was there a problem in his own school with the fact that they lacked a department for activities that could make this type of extra-curricular activities happen, it was also argued that boys were perhaps not suitable subjects. The interest of the boys was argued to fall way outside the realm of the project and he feared that they would feel alien to the project and thus not be able to execute it in a suitable manner (School K, 2009-09-08).

Additional problems that were identified related more to the situation at the school where many teachers are only working part-time at this particular school and part-time at some other school. This was possibly problematic not only in the sense that teachers may be unwilling or even perceive it impossible to engage much of their spare time but also that teachers were not educated enough to have discussions on these topics. Some of the topics, especially relating to sex-education, were also perceived as too sensitive to be discussed at the school. An implementation of the program would thus, in the view of this principal, necessitate education of the teachers on the relevant topics as well as some modification in order to prevent too sensitive subjects (School K, 2009-09-08).

It is not possible to make any generalization about this meeting seeing that it is only one out of many schools and that other schools in the private sector that had not been involved were to differing degree already working with a broader curriculum where they attempt to teach the "whole child" not only with a focus on the academics (Principal, School J, 2009-09-07). Nonetheless, others have expressed similar views that boys are much harder to get engaged in this type of project (School K, 2009-09-08) or expressed that girls at least are more suitable due to the idea that girls are more caring in their nature than boys (Schools A, 2009-10-07; G, 2009-10-11; I, 2009-10-14). Similar ideas have also been expressed in relation to the public versus private schools where a Senator claimed that the public school system was already straining its resources in order to keep the academic level while the private schools have better resources and thus also time to focus on other issues in school

(Dudin, 2009-09-10). Such a view was also given from some of the private schools that, even though not participating in the Life-Link program, were focusing on educating students in a broader manner than merely the subjects in the curriculum (Principal, School J, 2009-09-07). Public schools, as well as some private, were perceived to have too much of a focus on test scores (Principal, School J, 2009-09-07) but that these schools, who saw themselves as quite different in their approach compared to other schools, gave time for the student to realize “not only what you can do” but also “what you want to do” (Student, School J, 2009-09-07).

What the above paragraphs aim to describe, besides the perceptions from those who have not been engaged with Life-Link activities, is that there are certain presumptions in place already in Jordan that to some degree have been overcome by those involved. Not the least the discussion with the boy who had been engaged in the program as well as the comments from the teachers at that particular school where both boys and girls had been involved showed that there is a possibility of engaging boys in the program with good results in Jordan (School I, 2009-10-14). On top of this is the fact that the program at this particular school was executed by students as part of their final project at the school, both of the students that took on this project were boys, suggest further that the initial fear is somewhat possible to overcome. Nonetheless it presents a problem with initiation that could obstruct the spread of the project in Jordan if the spread is not administered or emphasized to larger degree than already today.

## Conclusions

The concluding analysis of this report is divided into two main aspects. The first looks critically at how the Life-Link program has performed in the Jordanian case while the second one addresses some of the shortcomings by focusing on possible ways to enhance the program. The second part will also devote some time to address the underlying issue of applicability in post-conflict situations of similar programs such as the Life-Link program.

### **The Life-Link program evaluated**

When it comes to active decision making and self-control it seems as though there is little doubt that the *Water for Life* project has been very efficient. The students argue that they have tried to adapt to the ways of careful water use that the program supports. Though it is hard to make any clear reference to the amount of change that had been seen it is beyond any doubt that many, if not all, of the students involved have adopted the ideas about care for water. The implications that were given by the teachers also suggest that there is little doubt that the work that was performed, not the least by working in teams, had contributed to a more caring interaction between the students at large. It is nonetheless worth noting also that not all students expressed that they had been able to change, both when it comes to parents but also in some cases to themselves they had realized over time that it was very hard to change behaviors that are deeply rooted.

In relation to the idea of changed attributions connected to 'others' it seems as though the interest that was shown in sharing their experiences as well as gain knowledge from others who have worked on similar issues is a positive sign. It should also be stated that the teachers seemed very positive towards exchange which is clearly pointing towards a possibility of making closer interaction in the future. The apolitical nature of the *Water for Life* project may be one of the reasons why it has been so accepted by the students, teachers, and parents but could also be a strong reason for why cross-border cooperation would be possible.

There are nonetheless positive aspects of the personal relations that those involved were able to attribute to the program. The scarcity of water in Jordan may very well be one of the important reasons for why this program has had such an effect on the students. It also complies to a high degree with what SIDA calls for in relation to the programs to be based on the needs of the receivers. The detailed stories on how the students brought the issues home and to people on the streets were not only fascinating but also a good receipt on their own engagement. Being able to practically see

the implementation their work has also seemed important to the students who were monitoring the family's water use and wholeheartedly trying to decrease the waste of water at home. Together with the issues discussed under the subsection above there is reason to believe that the *Water for Life* program actually works in a way that could be referred to as "peace-by-proxy".

The term "peace-by-proxy" aims to refer to the possibility of support pacifying attitudes amongst the subjects without necessarily touching upon difficult issues such as war and peace. This should be taken into consideration as mostly an interpersonal peace but there are mechanisms in it that may possibly be expanded to larger audiences and circumstances.

One of the main reasons for looking closer at this idea is the experienced shortcomings of some of the aspects of the *Culture of Care* project, which relates to the tendency of schools to focus on issues they themselves find relevant to their own situation. In schools where there are students who are daily reminded, if not directly affected, by conflict it was too hard for the teachers to talk about these issues. In other schools it seemed easier but the work that was done was in this case mostly connected to how to help one side that was affected by the conflict which in the end may hamper an inclusive approach of care. In extent, there is reason to doubt a positive effect on the attributions that are applied to all parties if references are too biased towards one of them. Such "selective solidarity" could to some degree be based in the extensive ownership by those who participate in the projects where the personal interests or perceptions of teachers, as well as those that students bring from home, may be negative in the long run. Recalling the expressed wishes of SIDA for programs to have a backbone of democracy, diversity, but also equality, this should not be overlooked.

### **Prospects and possibilities to spread and develop**

Though most of the topics in the analytical framework has been touched upon there is one issue of great importance that is remaining, the sustainability of the program. There is little doubt that the work on *Water for Life* does not satisfy the environmental aspects. Those issues tackled by many schools in relation to *Culture of Care*, e.g. discussions on poverty but also the social aspects of the program at large, do strive for social but also to some degree economic solidarity, if not sustainable economic growth. Nonetheless, a program in itself is also in need of sustainability over time if it is to have a long-term impact on the receiving end. This section will put the report in relation to, firstly, the possibility of expanding the existing program in Jordan and, secondly, the applicability to post-conflict situations.

### **The Life-Link Program**

This section will devote time on the positive and negative aspects of what has been presented in the empirical section and apply this to practical suggestions for expansion of the program, to make it more efficient as well as possibly sustaining it over a longer period of time.

- **The Program:** The engagement that was seen in the practical issues was clearly the highest and it is thus recommended that this aspect could be even more developed. The water bill activity could be complemented with other similar exercises where the students also get a first hand receipt on the impact of their efforts.
  - *Engagement:* The clear tendency of having mostly girls involved in the projects is a clearly negative aspect. It is thus recommended that further emphasis on trying to reach a gender equal basis of receivers should be beneficial for the program. As there was a tendency of perceiving boys' schools as not as suitable for this type of programs there might be need to further emphasize this point with relevant people in the partner organizations and at the Ministry of Education. It is difficult to do so and still have the total voluntary basis of engagement, which is important not the least in relation to the teachers. For continuity and wider inclusiveness it would be very important.
  - *Execution:* Many of the schools were concerned with the amount of extracurricular activities. It is thus recommended that further emphasis on developing good and practical examples of how to interlink the program into regular curricular activities should be taken. Examples such as the Human Rights discussions in English language class but also a number of activities within the natural sciences have a direct relationship to the Life-Link program. If possible, one way of doing so is to, by the help of the UNESCO Commission at the Ministry of Education, get a contact with the department in charge of the revision of the national syllabus before the next reform.
  - *Expansion:* A wish from the students has been the possibility of sharing their experience with the community at large. In regards to this Life-Link, but also its cooperative partners in the receiving countries, should investigate such possibilities. Such initiatives could come on small levels where the activity of cleaning the area around the school or in the neighborhood was a well received marketing opportunity for the program as well as for the students.
- Another issue is relating to the contact with other involved schools. Very few schools expressed that they used the Life-Link webpage in order to have contact and receive information from what other schools have achieved. Though a possible strain in the resources of such a small organization as Life-Link it would be recommended to create more user friendly possibilities to connect with other schools through the web.

- *Incentives*: The connection that students felt to the topic of *Water for Life* is by far the strongest incentive that was seen in order for committing them to the cause. A possible way forward is to further identify, or for that sake give suggestions for independent schools to identify, topics of importance. In this regard it is recommended that the apolitical nature that so far has been present should be beneficial if the best outcome is to be received. The already adopted expansion at one school of discussing the problems of endangered animal species is one of many possibilities for this. Nonetheless it is important that all of this shall remain within the spirit of the Life-Link agenda.
- **A future in a jungle of initiatives**: One of the greatest obstacles at present is the jungle of initiatives within the school system. Life-Link is deemed to be unique in the context of Jordan and it is thus important that it remains present. Nonetheless, in order to do so it is desirable for the program to continue to have a presence in the country through the UNESCO and the UNESCO Commission. In regard to this it would be beneficial to stress that the programs are continuous. As one class graduates there is no restriction in starting the program over with a new class. Since there is always the risk that the people in charge at individual schools are changed over the years it is important that Life-Link continues to stress its presence. It is also recommended to further develop a section in the Guides that suggest possible ways of sustaining the programs in the schools and communities by the students and teachers to cement its durability.
- **Life-Link Spirit?**: In most schools visited there was a clear sense of what could be referred to as a Life-Link spirit. Besides the importance of continuing to have such a caring spirit at the schools that are involved it is of importance that the students who have been involved in the program keep their spirit alive. Some students have been disappointed when realizing that the program ends by the time their time at school ends. In order to keep this spirit it has been suggested that there would be a Life-Link membership which could allow them to stay in contact with the organization even after they have graduated. Another possibility at this point would be to strengthen the bond between Life-Link and active organizations in Jordan where the engagement that they have gotten through the school is possible to extend even longer. It is thus recommended that Life-Link could expand their cooperation with the receiving end, through collaboration with UNESCO, the UNESCO Commission, the schools, or all of the above, by engaging other CSOs in Jordan. Benefits of such an arrangement would be possibly twofold. Students are able to continue their engagement and work as spokespersons for Life-Link in other SCOs even after they have left the school while Life-Link can continue to focus its resources on issues relating to the students.

### **Applicability to post-conflict situations**

- **Ownership:** When it comes to the ownership of the program it is believed that there are pros and cons with the extent of the ownership. Comparing to the situation in Jordan it is difficult to believe that a similar program would deem better in a country that has just recently experienced a violent conflict. It is not beyond doubt that such a situation could have a negative impact on the outcome seeing that so much relies on the teachers and that these most likely also have experienced the hardships of conflict before it ended.

Nonetheless it is also of utmost importance that a great level of ownership is kept since the relationship between what is deemed important by those involved and the actual impact of the program seems very relevant. In this regard a program such as Life-Link would most likely have to become a lot more context sensitive. This should nonetheless not be taken merely as a negative observation seeing since there is no reason to believe that the general outline of the program works but that it needs to be further developed to fit such sensitive situations.

**Peace by Proxy:** One should always be careful when working with children. If this type of program would be implemented in the post-conflict situation it would thus be necessary, to continue in line with the previous point, to prevent a situation where the children are put at risk. Thus it is important to keep the topics of discussion away from very politically, or by other means, sensitive topics. If not, the risk is that the children, just as in the situations in Transvaal and Kosovo, become tools for the conflict. Nothing could be further from the intent of the Life-Link initiative but needs careful consideration before being implemented.

The above described topics boil down to the major implication that can be drawn in relation to peace and conflict studies in this report, the so called Peace by Proxy. Within this concept is found not only the positive implications that have been seen in the schools that saw more caring attitudes between the students but also reassuring feelings of control. Students in the school for refugees were described to be very happy with the ability of working on something positive and something that may take their mind off the negative aspects of their situation. In this respect it is clear that the Life-Link program, not the least the *Water for Life* part, has had a positive impact. The ability of the students to get feedback through the water bill, the assuring feeling of being a part of something and possible to make a change in the situation, and sense of belonging to a greater cause was of great importance.

To conclude this report it should be noted that the impact of the Life-Link program has been good in the context of Jordan. The possibilities of the Peace-by-Proxy in relation to post-conflict scenarios needs to be further researched if it is to be applied. The students show great awareness and interest in the issues they have been educated in but also present a great will to share this not only in the

school and brought knowledge to a wider audience in the home, but also on the streets. The belief that they can, and are, making a change and their commitment to make the situation better for themselves and others is the best gift they can be given.

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