

The Arms Trade Treaty – learning opportunities

Introduction

Almost ¼ of the world's population live in fragile and conflict-affected countries. Armed conflict and military expenditure are having a severe impact on these countries' potential to develop. For example, it is estimated that Africa loses an average of £18bn per year as a result of armed violence.

Rather than decreasing, military expenditure in fragile and conflict-affected countries actually increased by 15% between 2009 and 2010. In the same year these countries accounted for less than 1% of global wealth but 7% of global arms sales.

In 2003 the Control Arms coalition began urging the United Nations to agree a binding Arms Trade Treaty that would effectively regulate the global trade in weapons. After 9 years of public campaigning by people around the world, the UN hosted a month-long conference in July 2012 to negotiate the treaty. The UN General Assembly meeting in October 2012 is the next step in passing and finally ratifying this treaty.

This provides a timely opportunity for young people to learn about contemporary conflict, compare current with past conflicts and take action to add their voices to calls for a robust and effective Arms Trade Treaty

Classroom resources

Oxfam's *Making Sense of World Conflicts* resource includes a variety of activities encouraging KS3, KS4 and KS5 students to examine and question the impact of contemporary conflicts from a variety of perspectives. It is suitable for Citizenship, Geography and History lessons
http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/making_sense_of_world_conflict/?22

The *Darfur: Teaching about the Issues* resource provides first hand testimony from young people caught up in a contemporary conflict. It uses active learning strategies from *Get Global* for KS3 and KS4 students to question analyse and plan their responses to the evidence. It is suitable for Citizenship and English lessons.
<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/darfur/?22>

History teachers may wish to use both resources as a basis for comparing contemporary conflict with historical episodes such as the World Wars, the Cold War and the arms race preceding World War One. Key questions would include the degree to which the impact of

current conflicts and patterns of military expenditure are similar or different to the past and why.

Curriculum making

Contemporary conflicts are fast moving and fluid. Formerly conflict-ridden countries, such as Sierra Leone, have enjoyed significant success at peace making while 'success stories' from the past, such as Cote d'Ivoire, have plunged into violence.

Teachers are therefore encouraged to keep abreast of the news when designing and updating resources. The Guardian, From Poverty to Power, Global Dashboard and Control Arms should all feature updates as they happen:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development>

<http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/>

<http://www.globaldashboard.org/>

<http://controlarmsblog.posterous.com/>

Amnesty International provides updates on the Arms Trade Treaty for young people:

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=11275>

Please share any new resources you develop by emailing education@oxfam.org.uk