Education plays a vital role in rebuilding conflict-affected communities as they transition to a peaceful future. When schools are conflict-free and children are in classrooms, people sense that stability is returning and that change is possible.

Creative Associates International’s strategy identifies the unique needs of educational systems and then engages communities to establish safe environments for learning and healing. With its on-staff experts, network of international and local partners, the private sector and government officials, Creative’s projects elevate teachers’ skills, incorporate teaching materials that emphasize literacy and numeracy and introduce technologies that increase access. It guides the development of educational policies that promote equity, access, quality and inclusion.

This holistic approach goes beyond the classroom: It brings healing through psycho-social support, promotes stability through reconciliation and launches opportunities through training in marketable vocational skills.

**A CONFLICT SENSITIVE APPROACH**

Creative’s conflict sensitive approach to education starts with robust analysis of the context to gain deep understanding of the issues on the ground. Because conflict affects education, and vice versa, the factors underlying their interaction are key.

Working closely with the community, Creative develops conflict and context-sensitive interventions, including policies that promote equity and inclusion, mitigate conflict, prioritize participation and local leadership and focus on safety and violence prevention.

Programs pay special attention to reintegrating those whose education has been most affected by conflict: out-of-school children and youth.

In Yemen, schools in the southern governorate of Abyan had been destroyed in 2011 as militants and security forces battled for control of key cities. As the combatants cleared out, the schools were in ruins, and some were littered with unexploded bombs.

Creative’s USAID-funded Community Livelihoods Program, the Government, and Yemeni communities coordinated their efforts to rebuild classrooms for more than 10,000 students. As access to education increased, so did perceptions of improved security and government legitimacy. Seeing schools come back to life helped convince internally displaced persons to return.

At the same time, Creative worked with Yemen’s Ministry of Education to implement an early grade reading program that addressed children’s very low literacy rates.

It introduced a comprehensive, phonics-based reading program and equipped teachers to use it. The intervention was so successful that Yemen’s government decided to implement the early grade reading approach nationally. It is now part of the official first grade curriculum.

Across Creative’s education in conflict and crisis-affected environments programs the focus is on students. Increasing their access and improving the quality of...
their education. Safety, reintegration and psycho-social support are emphasized so that classes can resume, along with a sense of normalcy and opportunity.

Creative’s programs also incorporate teachers, school administrations, community members and governments with a mandate to rebuild or strengthen the institutional capacity of education systems.

METHODS PROVEN WORLDWIDE

Creative’s successful post-conflict education work began in 1989 in the Yamasès Valley of Honduras, near the Nicaraguan border, where it used education to complement disarmament, demobilization and repatriation of youth combatants and their families into society.

Since then, Creative has carried out critical and robust interventions in more than 26 conflict or crisis-affected countries—most recently Afghanistan, Iraq, Uganda, South Sudan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan, Timor Leste and Yemen.

The organization also draws on its depth of experience working in conflict-affected communities on a variety of non-education issues, from stabilization and elections to crime and violence prevention.

From teacher training to curriculum to policy development and database design and management, Creative ensures inclusion, participation and local leadership with a view toward conflict mitigation and prevention.

Its technical and logistical support are flexible and responsive—which enable its experts to deliver a wide range of quality education services in high-risk, complex and rapidly-changing security environments. In some conflict-affected areas, Creative offers accelerated learning and other specialized curricula shaped by local need and context.

In northern Nigeria, for example, less than 30 percent of school-aged children are estimated to have basic literacy and numeracy skills, and many struggle with the consequences of violence and instability that has even made targets out of schools and caused unpredictable demographic shifts. The quality of basic education is extremely poor, leading to low demand and unacceptably low academic performance, especially in the Quranic school system.

With the support of USAID, Creative launched the Northern Education Initiative (NEI) to strengthen basic education systems by increasing access to quality education and social services in Bauchi and Sokoto states. The four-year project also established health and social service programs and provided care and support for orphans and vulnerable children.

NEI worked with the government to adapt policies, enhance systems and develop tools and procedures to address five key elements common to effective schools: learning, teaching, school management, parental participation, and responsiveness to children’s needs.

The program also trained more than 3,500 classroom teachers and facilitators.

With the support of USAID, Creative’s experts utilize the rich educational space to support the transition from crisis to stability by redressing inequities, modeling new behaviors in educational governance and laying a foundation for a better future.
in literacy, math, life skills and psychosocial counseling to measurable impact: The project saw a 33 percent boost in student enrollment where it was active, with girls representing an impressive 38 percent jump.

All of Creative’s programs develop local partnerships that promote community participation. In this way, Creative benefits from its partners’ insight and influence while promoting local ownership and building stakeholder capacity that bolsters long-term sustainability.

HEALTH, EDUCATION AND RECONCILIATION IN SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

The seven-year Health, Education and Reconciliation (HEAR) project laid the foundation for strengthened education systems and increased community capacity and engagement with an eye toward promoting peace and reconciliation in a country strained by decades of war.

It achieved these results despite encountering infrastructure, logistic and security hurdles common in conflict-affected areas.

The USAID-funded project taught more than 1,500 school teachers from 201 schools to provide psycho-social support and incorporate student-centered lessons on conflict resolution and violence prevention in addition to health, hygiene and English.

It trained 195 parent-teacher associations to make school development plans, write funding proposals and recognize their responsibility for school management. These groups have made huge contributions of local materials for classroom construction and local development projects like latrines, fences and water storage facilities.

HEAR also provided Vitamin A and deworming tablets to nearly 28,000 school children, and insecticide-treated bed nets to more than 22,000, drastically reducing the number of pupils who missed school due to illness. By training 618 Community Health Workers to disseminate health information and promote hygiene and sanitation in schools and neighborhoods, the results will be sustainable.

The project worked closely with education officers, school administrators, teachers and communities to improve school management and teaching methods, as well as addressing the psycho-social needs of pupils.

Its integrated approach empowered residents, internally displaced persons and returnees to be a part of their children’s education.

Creative Associates International provides outstanding, on-the-ground development services and forges partnerships to deliver sustainable solutions to global challenges.

Founded in 1977 by four enterprising women, Creative’s experts focus on education, economic growth, youth, workforce development, governance and elections, among other key areas. Creative is recognized for its ability to quickly adapt and excel in conflict and post-conflict environments.

Thanks to the support of international clients, multilateral donors and the private sector, Creative has active programs in more than 20 countries—from Honduras to Tanzania and Yemen to Cambodia. Since its founding, Creative has undertaken projects in more than 85 countries.

Today, the company counts on a professional staff of nearly 1,000 people around the world who are committed to working with officials, non-governmental organizations and community members to realize the positive change they seek.