This article discusses the 1984 "Children of War" tour. Thirty-eight young people from war-torn countries worldwide were united by the Religious Task Force for the Mobilization for Survival, an interfaith, interracial coalition based in Brooklyn, New York. They were joined by twelve Americans from many racial backgrounds. The troupe traveled across the United States speaking to 25,000 high school students. Their purpose: "To share their war experiences, their vision of hope for the future, and a blueprint for working toward peace."

These children shared some of the terrors and horrors they had experienced. "Sira Bugenins-Nsibirwa, 15, grew up in Uganda witnessing the horrors of the Idi Amin regime. Sira was shot in the abdomen while escaping across the border to Zaire with his father. Donald Daly, 14, from Belfast, saw his mother assassinated in their home when he was 10 years old. Maysoun Ayyad, a 15-year-old Palestinian living in a refugee camp in Israel, saw her family's possessions destroyed by vigilante attacks."

Despite all they have experienced, these children have fought the tendency to be filled with hate and thoughts of revenge. They have decided instead to use their energy constructively; they work for peace and hope in the future. They want to help stop the hatred and fighting—in their own countries and around the world.

Hanna Rubiez, an 18-year-old from Beirut, Lebanon, summed the basic purpose of this diverse and unique group of kids: "I believe now the way to solve problems is by talking, negotiations, and not by war. I really like to talk to teenagers because this world is going to be ours in 20 years. We're going to rule this world, and we want a peaceful world."

The group offers this "Children of War Peace Declaration":

We are: the children of the world. We have gathered to share our experiences, hopes, and goals for peace and justice.

We come from: war-torn areas of the earth such as Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Israel, the West Bank, South Africa, Namibia, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Uganda, the Marshall Islands, Cambodia, and Vietnam and from the United States and West Germany.

We believe: That it is the fundamental right of all children not to be killed or to kill.

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

1. If you had been shot, seen one of your parents killed, or had your home destroyed, how would you respond? What do you think would be the "right" way to respond?
2. What do you think of the "Children of War Peace Declaration"? Do you believe what they believe?
3. Would you join a group such as Children of War, a group aimed at promoting world peace? Why or why not?
4. Will today's teenagers really rule the world in twenty years, as one of the children in this article says? If not, who will? If so, does this scare you?
5. Can teenagers make a difference in the world today? Can they really facilitate world peace? How?
6. Do you really believe that peace is possible in today’s world? What needs to happen?

**IMPLICATIONS**

1. The moral and ethical standards of most people are formed during their youth. Therefore, it is important to create a peaceful environment for them.
2. American youth are largely ignorant of what really happens in other countries, what is occurring behind the newspaper headlines. They need opportunities to interact with "children of war" through programs designed to understand the backgrounds of others.
3. Kids need to see the effects of different courses of action, so that they can make better decisions when they control the world.
4. As influential people in the lives of youth, youth workers can help kids see that there are many solutions to a single problem, and that some solutions are more realistic and practical than others.

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