

War from the Victims' Perspective, *Photographs by Jean Mohr*

Dear teachers and educators,

To mark the 150th anniversary of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the signing of the first Geneva Convention, the Musée de l'Elysée has organised an exhibition, with support from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, entitled War from the Victims' Perspective – Photographs by Jean Mohr.

The exhibition, which will run from 23 August to 26 October 2014 at the Landesmuseum Zürich, celebrates the work of Jean Mohr, the internationally renowned photographer from Geneva.

“War from the Victims' Perspective – Photographs by Jean Mohr” will run alongside the exhibition “14/18 – Switzerland and the Great War”, offering a unique opportunity to simultaneously explore the history of the First World War and the issue of victims of conflict. A committed human rights advocate, Jean Mohr is one of the finest practitioners of humanist photography. By focusing on ordinary people and their day-to-day lives, the 50 photos that make up the exhibition give a human face to the impact of war and conflict.

The aim of this toolkit is to facilitate a deeper understanding of the photographic work of Jean Mohr and to make the content of the exhibition more accessible. We provide a variety of teaching resources and activities, which we have developed with specific age groups and levels in mind. As well as clearly defined learning targets for each activity, we present information in an easily understandable way and offer a choice of learning activities that are adapted to a range of school audiences.

Our toolkit contains background information on the artist, his approach as well as the exhibition themes. To enrich the pupils' learning experience, we have devised activities to be undertaken prior to and during the visit, as well as follow-up classroom activities that delve deeper into the content and themes of the exhibition.

We hope you enjoy your visit!

Teacher toolkit

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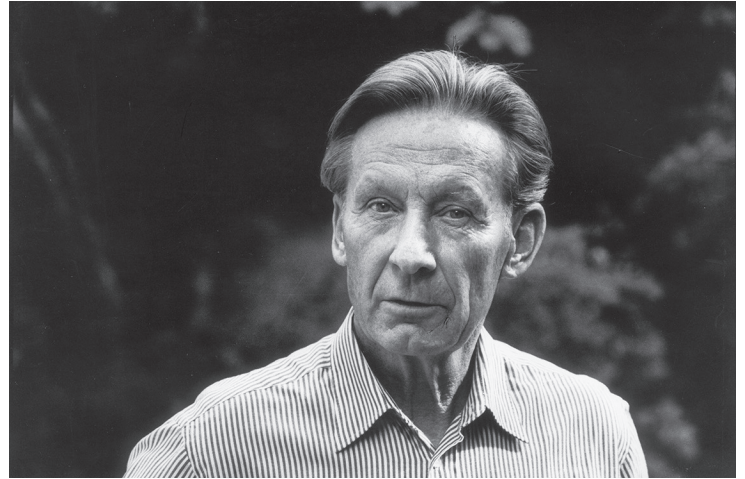
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War from the Victims' Perspective

Photographs by Jean Mohr

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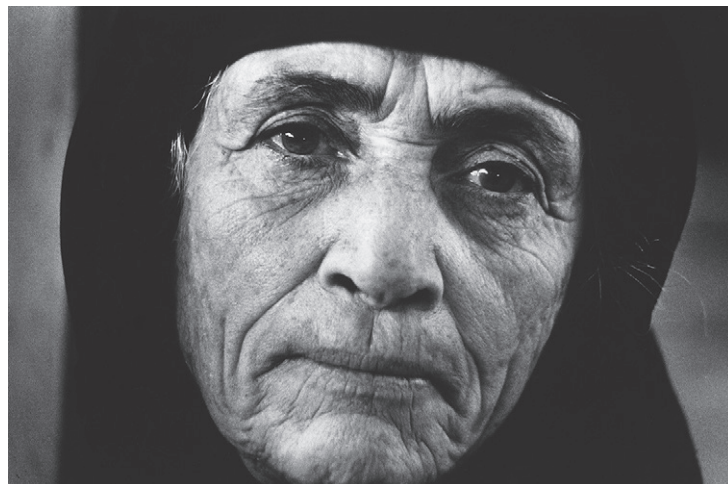
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1. Preparing for your visit

- **About the artist**

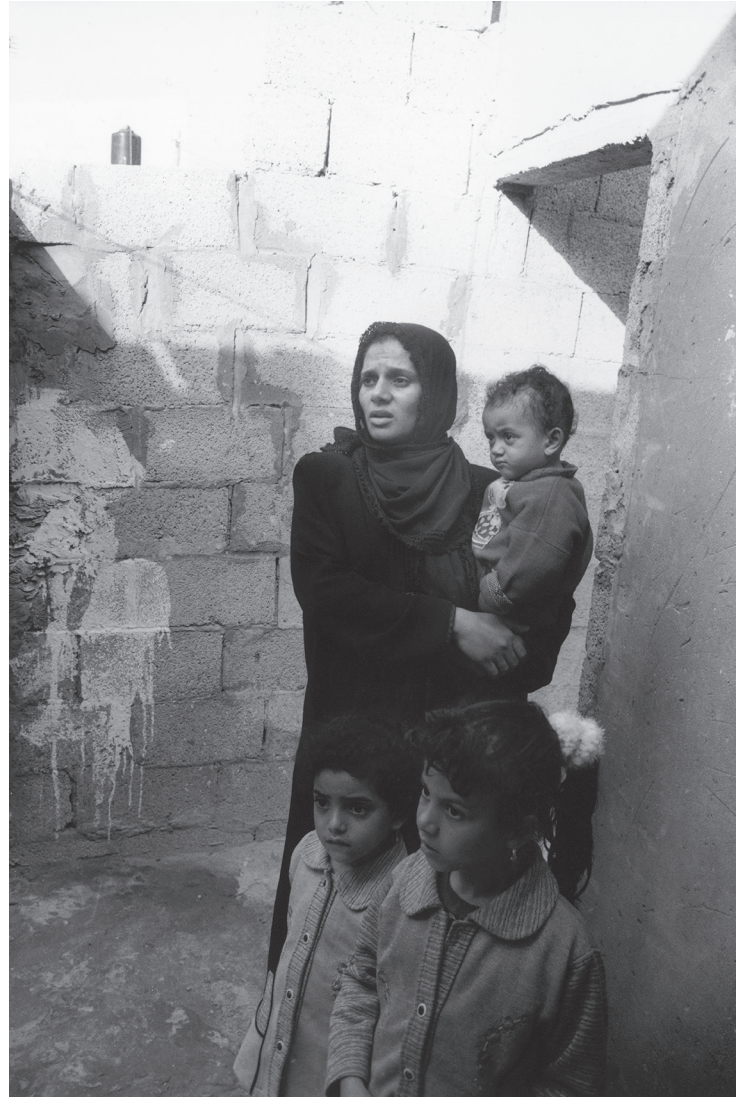
Born in Geneva in 1925, Jean Mohr has worked for several non-governmental organisations and humanitarian agencies, most notably the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). It was during a humanitarian mission that Mohr, aged 30, bought his first reflex camera and decided to devote himself, full-time, to photography. The many decades Jean Mohr spent working directly with war victims has afforded him a unique insight into the emotional dimension of conflict. Mohr's photo documentaries reflect his compassion, sensitivity and profound respect for the dignity of victims.

A pioneer of humanist photography, Jean Mohr was awarded the Photokina (Cologne) prize in 1978 for the photographer who had made the greatest contribution to the cause of human rights. In 1984, he received the Musée de l'Elysée Contemporary Photography Award, and in 1988 he became the first photographer to win the City of Geneva Fine Arts Prize. Between 1961 and 2013 his work has been the subject of over 80 exhibitions worldwide.

- **About the exhibition**

War from the Victims' Perspective - Photographs by Jean Mohr demonstrates that victims of conflict and communities living in the aftermath of war are universal, not localised, issues. Many of the photos document the conflicts in Palestine, Cyprus and Africa. Others focus on the repercussions of war for the people of Iran, Pakistan and Nicaragua. The exhibition serves too as a reminder of the poor sanitation conditions in refugee camps during the Israeli-Arab conflict, humanitarian crises, the displacement of populations in post-colonial Africa, and the problem of internally displaced persons in Cyprus, a member of the European Union since 2004.

Although Jean Mohr documents the harsh reality faced by war victims, he does not consider himself a war photographer. Violence is absent from the photos in the exhibition despite the context in which they were taken. Rather than photographing subjects in vulnerable situations or focusing on the brutality of war, the artist prefers to capture the strength, resilience and hopefulness of the victims.



The exhibition *War from the Victims' Perspective - Photographs by Jean Mohr* is divided into four sections, each with a different theme:

Portraits of Exile

Featuring portraits of refugees from different countries and cultures, the first section gives a human face to the impact of conflict.

Temporary Landscapes

The second section deals with the impact that war has on people's homes. The photos document the displacement process and the precarious settlement of victims in camps, reception centres, mosques and shanty towns.

The Children's Diaspora

Featuring images that capture the day-to-day lives of war's youngest victims, this section reveals the gamut of situations faced by child refugees, as well as the many and diverse activities they engage in. Some photos show children attending a medical centre or clinic, while others show them playing, dancing or in class at a temporary school.

Life Goes On

The final section documents how people adapt to temporary situations that stretch out indefinitely. The images illustrate how important the distribution of food and clothing is, as well as documenting efforts to ensure that refugees can continue their schooling and education. This section includes the iconic image of a young Mozambican refugee and her newborn baby in a clinic in Lundo, Tanzania.



2. Classroom activities prior to your visit

Both the approach taken by Jean Mohr and the subject matter – victims of war – mean that the exhibition is suitable for all ages. However, given that war is a subject rarely tackled with younger children, the activities here are targeted at either the 9-12 or the 13-18 age group.

With a view to offering young visitors a well-rounded learning experience, this section of the toolkit sets the framework for designing, developing and undertaking activities that are suitable for use in both classroom and after-school settings, either before, during or after the visit. Each activity has been designed around specific learning targets.

- **Individual art work on the theme of war, ages 9-12**

Instructional objectives

1. Help pupils to draw a picture or make a collage (or a combination of the two) which reflects the pupil's personal views on war.
2. Ask the class to think about the different ways in which war can be visually documented.
3. Ask the class to think about the living conditions of war victims, particularly children.
4. Encourage the class to share their personal opinions of war.

Guiding questions

1. What is a conflict? How does a conflict degenerate into a war?
2. How can war be documented visually?
3. In what kind of media are you likely to find images of war?
4. What emotions do these images convey?
5. How do you feel when you look at images of war?

Recommended time for this activity

45 minutes

Material

Images of war from multiple sources: newspapers, magazines, websites. Cardboard sheet, pencils, felt-tip pens, scissors and glue.

Individual art work on the theme of war: step-by-step guide

1. Collect war images from multiple media or ask pupils to find such images and bring them to class (photocopies or originals).
2. Initiate a class discussion on these images using the guiding questions above and ask the class to think about the living conditions of war victims.
3. Explain the goal of this activity: to draw a picture or create a collage (or a combination of the two) which reflects the pupil's personal views on war. Each pupil carries out this work individually and independently.
4. Collect the finished art work and show them, as a group, to the class.
5. Facilitate a class discussion on the similarities and differences in their drawings, then talk about the recurring images in their art work.



- **Generating a tag cloud on the theme of war (whole-class activity), ages 13-18**

Instructional objectives

1. Help the class to generate a tag cloud that reflects their opinions of war (on paper or on a board).
2. Ask the class to think about the different ways in which war can be visually documented.
3. Ask the class to think about the living conditions of war victims, particularly children.
4. Encourage the class to share their personal opinions of war.

Guiding questions

1. What do you see in these images?
2. What emotions do these images convey?
3. How do you feel when you look at images of war?

Recommended time for this activity

45 minutes

Material

Images of war from multiple sources: newspapers, magazines, websites. Cardboard sheet, pencils, felt-tip pens, scissors and glue.

Generating a tag cloud: step-by-step guide

1. Collect media images of war or ask pupils to find such images and bring them to class (photocopies or originals).
2. Project, distribute or share these images in class.
3. Compile a list of keywords that emerge from this work. Encourage the class to think about what these images show (weapons, bullets, fire, destruction, death etc.) and the emotions they convey (fear, sadness, anger, distress etc.).
4. Ask the class to vote, with a show of hands, on the importance of each keyword.
5. Ask the class to vote, with a show of hands, on the form that the tag cloud should take (e.g. a gun, a flame, a bomb etc.).
6. Draw the chosen shape on the board or on a large cardboard sheet (in pencil, so that it can be erased later).
7. Fill the shape with the keywords suggested by the class. The size of the word should reflect the importance that the pupils have attributed to it.



- **Research on human rights and the Geneva Conventions, ages 13-18**

Instructional objectives

1. Help the class to understand war from the victims' perspective.
2. Encourage the class to think about the conditions faced by victims and what their basic human needs are.
3. Help the class to better understand the importance of limiting the effects of armed conflicts, as well as the role played by conventions, treaties, non-governmental organisations and humanitarian agencies.

Research on human rights and the Geneva Conventions: step-by-step guide

1. Ask the class to carry out group research on the importance of limiting the effects of armed conflicts, as well as on the role played by conventions, treaties, non-governmental organisations and humanitarian agencies.
2. Divide the class into groups and assign a specific topic to each group: Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions, the United Nations Charter, international humanitarian law, the work of the ICRC etc.
3. At the end of their research, each group will give an oral presentation to the class.

Material

Independent study and research



3. Museum activity

• Interpreting photographs, ages 9-18

Instructional objectives

1. Help the class learn to decode and interpret images.
2. Acquaint the class with Jean Mohr's humanist approach.
3. Prompt the class to think about the living conditions of war victims, especially children.
4. Help the class to grasp the emotions conveyed by the images, develop their own response to what they see and to express their interpretation in words.

Guiding questions

1. What do you see in this photo?
2. What is happening? How do you know?
3. What emotions does this photo convey?
4. How do you feel when you look at this photo, remembering that it was taken during a war?

Recommended time for this activity

1 hour

Material

Pencils and paper (to take notes)

Interpreting photographs – step-by-step guide

1. The aim of this exercise is to encourage the class to assimilate the images they see and to help them develop a personal interpretation based on the visual and textual information at their disposal. Although this is a guided activity, remind the class that it is their personal response to the image that is important, and that they are free to interpret and analyse it as they see fit.
2. We recommend that, before starting the visit, you briefly present the life of the artist, his work, his artistic approach and humanist focus to the class, and explain the four themes that the exhibition deals with.
3. We provide you with analytical resources for four photos, one from each section of the exhibition. We recommend that you encourage the class to actively participate when viewing the images.
4. When interpreting and analysing the photos, we recommend that you ask the class to take notes as this information will be helpful in the follow-up classroom activity designed to build on the experiences and knowledge the class acquired during their visit.



- **Analysis of photos in the *Portraits of life in exile* section**

The first part of the exhibition features images depicting life in exile. Take time to read aloud the photo caption and explain to the class what exile means.

The word exile refers to a situation in which individuals are banished from their native land. It also refers to the place where these individuals live, where they feel like outsiders and excluded.

With the photo in full view, initiate a discussion on the image by asking the class a series of basic questions.

Guiding questions

1. What do you see in this photo?
2. What is happening? How do you know?
3. What emotions does this photo convey?
4. How do you feel when you look at this photo, remembering that it was taken during a war?



Taking the activity a step further...

Formal analysis

Ask the class to study the composition of the photo and say what is the first, second, third thing (and so on) that catches their eye. Explain how artists use light and shade, focus and blurring, as well as framing to draw the viewer's eye to the focal point of the image.

Apply the same approach to other photos in the *Portraits of life in exile* section or allow the class to explore these images independently, with help from one of the recommended learning activities.

- **Analysis of photos in the *Temporary landscapes* section**

The second part of the exhibition features images depicting temporary landscapes. Take time to explain the theme of this section to the class and to read aloud the photo caption.

Temporary landscapes: this section shows the impact that war has on people's homes. The photos document the displacement process and the precarious settlement of victims in camps, reception centres, mosques and shanty towns.

Once again, with the photo in full view, initiate a discussion on the image by asking the class a series of basic questions.

Guiding questions

1. What do you see in this photo?
2. What is happening? How do you know?
3. What emotions does this photo convey?
4. How do you feel when you look at this photo, remembering that it was taken during a war?



Taking the activity a step further...

Content analysis

Initiate a class discussion on the impact of war on people's homes and how it forces victims to move away and find shelter elsewhere.

Talk to the class about basic human needs: protection from the elements (somewhere to live), food, clothing and access to medical care.

Formal analysis

Ask the class to study the composition of the photo and say what is the first, second, third thing (and so on) that catches their eye. Explain how artists use light and shade, focus and blurring, as well as framing to draw the viewer's eye to the focal point of the image.

Apply the same approach to other photos in the Temporary landscapes section or allow the class to explore these images independently, with help from one of the recommended learning activities.

- **Analysis of photos in the *Children in the diaspora* section**

The third part of the exhibition features images depicting children living in the diaspora.

Once again, take time to explain the theme of this section to the class and to read aloud the photo caption.

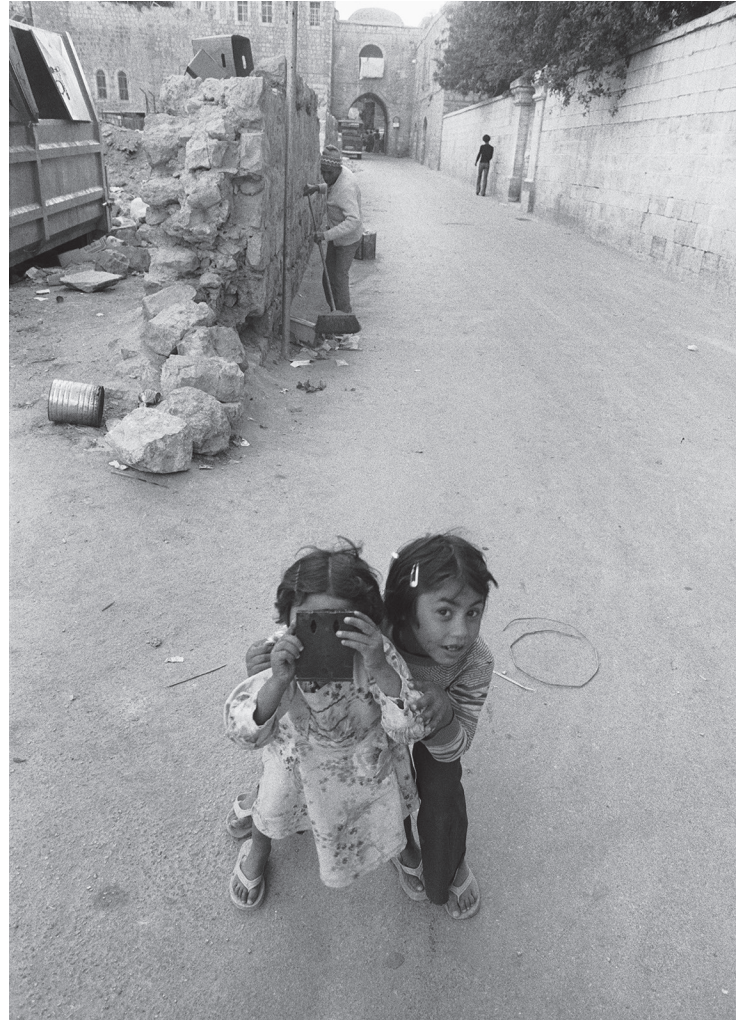
The word diaspora refers to the dispersion of a people or an ethnic group across the world. Diaspora also refers to the scattering of Jewish exiles to countries outside of Palestine.

Children in the diaspora: featuring images that capture the day-to-day lives of war's youngest victims, this section of the exhibition reveals the gamut of situations faced by child refugees, as well as the many and diverse activities they engage in. Some photos show children attending a medical centre or clinic, while others show them playing, dancing or in class at a temporary school.

Once again, with the photo in full view, initiate a discussion on the image by asking the class a series of basic questions.

Guiding questions

1. What do you see in this photo?
2. What is happening? How do you know?
3. What emotions does this photo convey?
4. How do you feel when you look at this photo, remembering that it was taken during a war?



Taking the activity a step further...

Content analysis

Explain the concept of “mise en abyme” or the mirroring effect as demonstrated in this image of a young girl photographing the photographer. If we were able to see her photo, it would show us what is happening behind Jean Mohr’s camera. Here, the roles are reversed: the subject becomes the photographer and the photographer the subject.

Initiate a class discussion on the impact of war and its consequences on the lives of child victims.

Talk to the class about children’s basic needs: protection from the elements (somewhere to live), food, clothing, access to medical care, the opportunity to learn and to play.

Apply the same approach to other photos in the *Children in the diaspora* section or allow the class to explore these images independently, with help from one of the recommended learning activities.

- **Analysis of photos in the *Life goes on* section**

This final part of the exhibition features images dealing with the theme of “Life goes on”. Take time to explain the theme of this section to the class and to read aloud the caption accompanying this iconic image of a young Mozambican refugee and her newborn baby in a clinic in Lundo, Tanzania.

Life goes on: this section documents how people adapt to a temporary situation that stretches out indefinitely. The images illustrate how important the distribution of food and clothing is, as well as documenting efforts to ensure that refugees can continue their schooling and education.

Once again, with the photo in full view, initiate a discussion on the image by asking the class a series of basic questions.

Guiding questions

1. What do you see in this photo?
2. What is happening? How do you know?
3. What emotions does this photo convey?
4. How do you feel when you look at this photo, remembering that it was taken during a war



Taking the activity a step further...

Content analysis

Explain to the class the concept of a symbol, whereby an individual or an image is used to represent an idea or belief. The baby born in the Lundo clinic symbolises life and hope for a better future.

Formal analysis

Ask the class to study the composition of the photo and say what is the first, second, third thing (and so on) that catches their eye. Explain how artists use light and shade, focus and blurring, as well as framing to draw the viewer’s eye to the focal point of the image.

Apply the same approach to other photos in the *Life goes on* section or allow the class to explore these images independently, with help from one of the recommended learning activities.

4. Follow-up classroom activities

- **Individual art work on the theme of basic human needs, ages 9-12**

Instructional objectives

1. Based on the photos they saw in the exhibition, ask the class to think about the living conditions of war victims, particularly children.
2. Help them to each draw a picture of what they consider to be basic human needs.
3. Encourage the pupils to share their personal opinions.

Guiding questions

1. What basic needs does a child have?
2. What emotional and social needs does a child have?

Recommended time for this activity

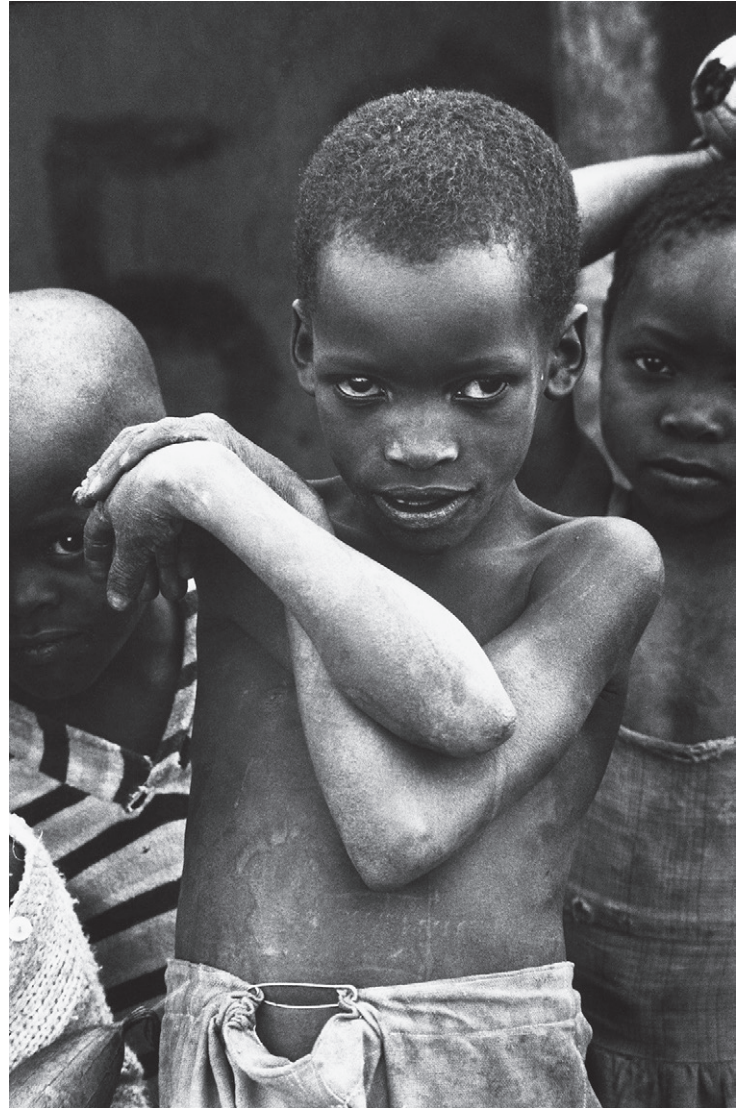
45 minutes

Material

Photocopies of Jean Mohr's photos from the exhibition (teacher toolkit). Paper, pencils and felt-tip pens.

Individual art work on the theme of basic human needs: step-by-step guide

1. Show the class some images from the Jean Mohr exhibition to jog their memories of their visit, and initiate a class discussion.
2. Prompt the class to think about basic human needs.
3. Explain the goal of this activity: to draw a picture that represents the basic needs of war victims.
4. Collect the finished drawings and show them, as a group, to the class.
5. Facilitate a class discussion on the similarities and differences in their drawings, then talk about the recurring images in their art work.
6. If this activity was undertaken prior to your visit, initiate a discussion on the difference between the direct approach to depicting war and the approach adopted by Jean Mohr.



- **Generating a tag cloud on the theme of war victims (whole-class activity), ages 9-12**

Instructional objectives

1. Help the class to generate a tag cloud that reflects the pupils' personal viewpoints on the theme of war victims (on paper or on a board).
2. Prompt the class to think about how victims live, particularly children, and their basic needs
3. Encourage the class to talk about the different emotions that the exhibition photos convey.

Recommended time for this activity

45 minutes

Material

Cardboard sheet, pencils, felt-tip pens, scissors, glue

Generating a tag cloud: step-by-step guide

1. Compile a list of keywords associated with the exhibition. Ask the class to think about the themes that the exhibition deals with and the emotions that the photos convey.
2. Ask the class to vote, with a show of hands, on the importance of each of the keywords.
3. Ask the class to vote, with a show of hands, on the form that the tag cloud should take (e.g. a house, a dove etc.)
4. Draw the chosen shape on the board or on a large cardboard sheet (in pencil, so that it can be erased later).
5. Fill the shape with the keywords suggested by the class. The size of the word should reflect the importance that the pupils have attributed to it.
6. If this activity was undertaken prior to your visit, compare the content of the pre- and post-visit tag clouds, with a view to demonstrating the approach that Jean Mohr's adopts in his photographic work.



5. Follow-up classroom activities

- **Discussion on the issue of war victims, ages 13-18**

Instructional objectives

1. Help the class to comprehend the situation faced by victims of war, as captured in Jean Mohr's photos.
2. Prompt the class to think about the direct and indirect consequences of war, particularly for child victims.
3. Facilitate a class discussion on solutions (conflict prevention), as well as on the need to protect victims and to guarantee the enforcement of the rules of international humanitarian law.

- **Discussion on conflict-related problems and solutions, ages 13-18**

Instructional objectives

1. Prompt the class to think about the direct and indirect consequences of war for its victims.
2. Ask pupils to imagine that they are a war victim and to describe what their life is like.
3. Explain the importance of Jean Mohr's work, which differs considerably from war coverage by the media.
4. Facilitate a class discussion on the goals of documentary and humanitarian photography.
5. Facilitate a class discussion on solutions (conflict prevention), as well as on the need to protect victims and to guarantee the enforcement of the rules of international humanitarian law.



Other ideas and modules on humanitarian themes (before and/or after visiting the exhibition) proposed by the Department of Foreign Affairs

You can combine humanitarian themes with a visit to the exhibition and discuss them in many different ways.

Below are a number of ideas and suggestions:

- Have a debate on different values (human rights and international humanitarian law)
- Think about the difficult living conditions for people and try to understand their situation better (refugees, war survivors, looking at a recent conflict and its development from a historical perspective)
- Get to know the organisations and people working for the most deprived (such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement)
- Switzerland's contribution in Europe and worldwide (Switzerland as a defender of humanitarian values and depositary of the Geneva Conventions; the signing of the first Geneva Convention as the cornerstone of international humanitarian law; international cooperation as a chance for peace; the tension between respect for human rights and global economic politics)
- A historical perspective:
 - In combination with the exhibition “14/18 – Switzerland and the Great War” at the Landesmuseum Zürich (registration and information: T. +41 58 466 66 00 / reservationen@snm.admin.ch)
 - How humanitarian action changed after the First World War. For the first time the number of civilian casualties outnumbered the soldiers.

Link for teachers

www.deza.admin.ch/agenda > Exhibition "War from the Victims' Perspective, *Photographs by Jean Mohr*"

Partner organisations:

