Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

Presented by the Center for Stabilization and Reconstruction Studies

March 30th – April 2nd, 2008
Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey CA

Co-Sponsored by The International Organization for Migration, Save the Children, and The Initiative for Inclusive Security

Save the Children

The Initiative for Inclusive Security
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Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

March 30 — April 2, 2008

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ABOUT THIS EVENT

The Center for Stabilization and Reconstruction Studies hosted a short course on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) from March 30 — April 2, 2008. The event was co-sponsored by the International Organization for Migration, Save the Children, and The Initiative for Inclusive Security. Forty-five participants from nongovernmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, government civilian agencies, and the armed forces met to review best practices and lessons identified from past DDR programs. Particular emphasis was placed on areas in which past programs have demonstrated the most shortcomings: the reintegration phase and the inclusion of women, children, and youth in DDR.

The Center for Stabilization and Reconstruction Studies (CSRS) is a teaching institute which develops and hosts educational programs for stabilization and reconstruction practitioners operating around the globe. Established by the Naval Postgraduate School in 2004 through the vision and congressional support of Congressman Sam Farr (CA-17), CSRS creates a wide array of programs to foster dialogue among practitioners, as well as help them develop new strategies and refine best practices to improve the effectiveness of their important global work.

Located at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, CSRS also contributes to the university's research and graduate degree programs. For more information about CSRS, its philosophy, and programs, please visit www.nps.edu/csrs.

The International Organization for Migration works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, be they refugees, displaced persons or other uprooted people such as former combatants.

Save the Children

Save the Children is the leading independent organization creating lasting change in the lives of children in need in the United States and around the world. Recognized for our commitment to accountability, innovation, and collaboration, our work takes us into the heart of communities, where we help children and families help themselves.

The Initiative for **Inclusive Security**

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The Initiative for Inclusive Security, including The Women Waging Peace Network, advocates for the full participation of all stakeholders, especially women, in peace processes. Creating sustainable peace is achieved best by a diverse, citizen-driven approach. Of the many sectors of society currently excluded from peace processes, none is larger or more critical to success than women. Through its publications, partnerships, and trainings, The Initiative supports the Women Waging Peace Network, which includes more than 800 women peacebuilders around the globe, and connects members with policy shapers to collaborate on fresh, workable solutions to long-standing conflicts.

> "A successful D&D process helps build confidence in the peace process and is a key ingredient for short-term security and stability."

Introduction

Recognizing that past disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs have fallen short of desired goals, practitioners are working together to develop innovative approaches to create a more inclusive, sustainable DDR process.

In the transition from war to peace, one of the most emblematic steps is the disarmament and demobilization (D&D) of armed groups with the hope that their members will be reintegrated into society as productive citizens. A successful D&D process helps build confidence in the peace process and is a key ingredient for short-term security and stability; reintegration, as part of a broader process of economic reconstruction, is important for longer-term stability, security, and prosperity. Unfortunately, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs often fall short of their goals because of their intensive focus on the processing of adult male ex-combatants to the detriment of female combatants, child soldiers, support personnel, and combatants' families. At the same time, reintegration has often failed for a variety of reasons: lack of funding; inadequate implementation (canned vocational training programs that often ignore economic realities); and narrow conceptualization (a focus on short-term material assistance to individuals which neglects the communities that are essential for social and economic reintegration). In response to these and other shortcomings, agencies and groups involved in DDR have engaged in a fruitful process of innovation on the ground and reflection on best practices to produce an emerging consensus on the components

Pictured from left to right: Kees Steenken, Swedish Defence College; Sophie da Câmara, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, United Nations Development Programme; Lejla Mavris, Global Majority; and Muwonge Maxie Joseph, Jamii Ya Kupatanisha.

At right: Lieutenant Colonel Apollinaire Ndayimirije, National Police Force, Government of Burundi, greets a fellow workshop participant as Gloria Jean Garland, Office of Democracy and Governance, US Agency for International Development, looks on.

necessary for an inclusive and sustainable process of DDR.[7]

To disseminate and more fully consider these findings, the Center for Stabilization and Reconstruction Studies, located in Monterey, California, hosted a short course entitled "Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration" from March 30 — April 2, 2008. The event was cosponsored by the International Organization for Migration, Save the Children, and The Initiative for Inclusive Security. Forty-five participants from nongovernmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, government civilian agencies, and the armed forces met to review best practices and lessons identified from past DDR programs as well as to identify areas in which challenges remain.

Part I of this report focuses on best practices and lessons identified from D&D processes. Part II discusses the challenges confronting those attempting to devise successful reintegration strategies and describes the ongoing efforts of the international community to respond to those challenges. Part III reviews the basic principles of a more inclusive approach to DDR that takes into account the special needs of often marginalized groups: women, children, and youth. The importance of addressing gender issues and including women's groups at all phases of the DDR process is also stressed. Part IV concludes by highlighting the guiding principles of DDR — such as the need for consultation, context-specific approaches, and capacity building — that were stressed throughout the workshop.

"The DDR event brought together 45 working practitioners to review best practices and identify current challenges to implementing successful programs."

> "Many successful D&D best practices evince a "do no harm" approach — don't create stockpiles, don't offer cash for guns, don't keep combatants at cantonment sites long-term, don't create excessive expectations, don't rush in without adequate planning — that is more easily articulated than observed."

Part I — Disarmament and Demobilization: Best Practices and Lessons Identified

Disarmament and demobilization is a politically sensitive, logistically challenging task. However, it is a necessary early step on the road from war to peace. As a consequence, it is important to design and implement initiatives that reflect realities on the ground and will withstand the pressures of the transition from war to peace.

After the signing of a peace agreement, one of the first actions undertaken is the disarmament and demobilization of the warring parties, usually in accord with provisions negotiated during the peace talks. These necessary and symbolically important first steps on the road from war to peace — the destruction of weapons, the doffing of military garb — play an important, but limited, role in the overall stabilization and reconstruction process. DDR experts were quick to note that no matter how well planned, a D&D process cannot succeed in the absence of political will. At the same time, even a well-executed D&D process is less important for its own accomplishments than for laying the necessary groundwork for reintegration. Should the latter fail, any successes of the D&D process will be ephemeral. The guns removed from circulation during the disarmament and dissolution of command structures during demobilization contribute little on their own to preventing conflict in the long run — new weapons can readily be obtained and fighters remobilized. Instead, success ultimately depends on a process of reintegration that removes the reasons for using guns.

Having said that, a poorly planned and executed D&D process can jeopardize peace, undermining the delicate fabric of confidences stitched together during peace talks. The volatility of the situation on the ground in the immediate aftermath of conflict, as well as the logistical challenges of processing thousands of individuals, render disarmament and demobilization a process fraught with potential difficulties. The best practices and lessons learned presented in this section represent the efforts of practitioners to undertake an administratively complex task in a politically explosive and quickly changing environment. As a result, many of the best practices evince a "do no harm" approach — don't create stockpiles that can be exploited, don't offer cash payments that will cause an influx of arms, don't keep combatants at cantonment sites for extended periods, don't provide cash resources that reinforce command structures, don't create excessive expectations, don't rush in without adequate planning — that is sometimes more easily articulated than observed.

Pictured at right: Simon Yazgi, Office of Rule of Law and Security, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Disarmament

Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes. (United Nations Secretary-General, note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, May 2005.)

Politically, disarmament is the most sensitive part of the DDR process with the warring parties often negotiating many of its terms during the peace process and writing them into the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Given this, the ultimate success or failure of disarmament depends on the willingness of warring parties to lay down their arms. While a disarmament program cannot create this political will, it is often one of the first measures undertaken during the stabilization process and has a good deal of symbolic significance as weapons are crushed by heavy machinery or offered up in bonfires. A well-run program can help build confidence among the warring parties (and the broader community) that the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement will be respected. Conversely, a poorly run program can jeopardize the peace process.

In addition to building confidence, disarmament can contribute to short-term stability and security by sopping up a portion of the surplus weaponry floating around in society. A number of the workshop participants noted that groups often withheld the best weapons and maintained arms caches, suggesting that lack of weaponry would not be a major factor — certainly not in the medium run — for explaining stability. From this perspective, the main purpose of disarmament is to contribute to the short-term security and stability necessary for reintegration and reconstruction efforts to take hold — and reduce the need for guns in the long run.

A breakout group discusses state-of-the-art approaches to DDR that include historically underrepresented groups.

Given time limitations, the workshop discussion of disarmament was limited to a few critical elements that were controversial or problematic from the perspective of civilian DDR experts.

The Need for Early Planning Versus Speedy Execution

Disarmament and demobilization are logistically challenging tasks undertaken amidst great uncertainty and serious information gaps. Not surprisingly, then, workshop experts stressed the need for an adequate period of early planning and information gathering. At the same time, disarmament and demobilization is often one of the first "deliverables" of the peace process or peacekeeping team in any country and there is an urgency to demonstrate results quickly — for reasons both noble (e.g., the need to build confidence) and expedient (e.g., a desire to speed the mission along and keep costs down). Too often, political and symbolic considerations trump the "administrative" need for planning and preparation, with predictable consequences that range from aborted disarmament processes to long waits at cantonment sites to reintegration programs that are based on assumptions rather than planning. In Liberia, for example, the UN mission was stood up in seven days, instead of the usual four months, and a DDR program was hurriedly put into place two months later. The process had to be aborted after only ten days and resumed again a few months later after the proper planning had been conducted.

No Weapons Buy Back

The United Nations (UN) is adamant in emphasizing that disarmament should not be presented as a weapons buy-back program. Such programs fuel the market for arms, generating inflows from neighboring countries and driving prices down; this allows participants to pocket a portion of the payment and use the remainder to replace forfeited weapons and potentially upgrade them. Most workshop participants emphasized that if material incentives are the primary motive of those who disarm, DDR is likely to fail. In other words, there must be a certain "political will" among the rank and file as well as the elite; weariness with war is necessary to open them to the new possibilities that civilian life might offer. As one expert noted, "$150 to $300 just isn't going to do it."

Despite this emphasis on not paying for disarmament, international organizations acknowledge that individual combatants require some compensation for turning in their weapons. In order to avoid the appearance and negative effects of a buy-back program, the sum offered is typically small ($150 to $300) and is usually not given to the individual at the time of the submission of a weapon but rather is paid in installments as part of a reinsertion package (the monetary and in-kind short-term aid provided to help the individual settle into civilian life). The first installment is paid after the participant submits to a multi-day processing period culminating in his or her demobilization. The final payments may be distributed over the span of several months and are often delivered to ex-combatants once they have been relocated to their ultimate place of settlement.

Managing Expectations

It is important, however, that the payment schedule is made clear to recipients during public awareness campaigns promoting disarmament and demobilization. In the case of Liberia, the DDR program advertised a payment of $300 for participation in the D&D process. Two days of riots ensued when combatants arrived and found that they would only receive $150 at the end of the initial

At right: Muwonge Maxie Joseph has written and worked on DDR issues extensively.

processing period and would receive the remaining money in the form of two additional payments spaced out across several months.

More broadly, workshop participants stressed the importance of managing expectations during the DDR process. Implementers should be careful not to oversell the program in an effort to generate participation. Instead, in an information- and resource-scarce environment, it is important to provide clear and detailed information about what the DDR process can offer and what is expected of participants.

The Need for Ongoing Efforts

Disarmament is an ongoing process that does not end with the last batch of surrendered weapons offered up in a symbolic bonfire. Inter alia, advocates of small arms and light weapons control must devise legislative frameworks appropriate for regulating the supply of weapons in accordance with country-specific norms of gun ownership; establish the registration and tracking of legal weaponry; and set up enforcement mechanisms and information campaigns to make the terms of new regulations widely known. Given the regional dimension of most illicit arms markets, coordination with neighboring countries and regional organizations in both the formulation and implementation

> "The information- and resource-scare environment of the DDR process requires that practitioners manage the expectations of participants and local communities carefully."

At right: Sophie da Câmara offers her insights into how to design and implement successful DDR programs.

of control regimes is essential. Weapons-for-development programs hold out the promise of defusing tensions in areas where guns are growing dangerously plentiful by reducing the gun supply and addressing root causes while avoiding the problems of individual buy-back schemes. Public relations campaigns challenging the notion of gun ownership as a sign of manhood may also be necessary to change the cultural factors contributing to gun violence.

Demobilization and Reinsertion

Demobilization is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion... [R]einsertion is short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs, and can last up to one year. (Secretary-General, note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, May 2005).

Demobilization, like disarmament, is a politically sensitive issue. Ideally, most of the controversial details, down to the location and accessibility of the demobilization sites, are worked out during the peace process.[2] While disarmament is carried out by the military with civilian support, civilians assume center stage during the demobilization process, with support from the military. This shift in roles is appropriate, as the main focus of this phase is facilitating the transformation of participants from soldiers to civilians.

After 15 years of experience with demobilization, the DDR community has overwhelmingly come to accept the need for an inclusive process that encompasses all members of armed groups and not just combatants. However, debates still persist over the use of static or mobile sites and how best to administer reinsertion assistance (though in practice the trade-offs seem to be not as stark as in theory). In addition, while a goal of DDR programs is to contribute to the dismantling of military command structures, it is unclear whether they meet this objective. Finally, there is widespread agreement on the need to be flexible in the design and implementation of programs but this principle seems to be more easily stated than followed. These points are discussed in the following sections.

Eligibility Criteria and Screening: The Need for Inclusiveness

Identifying who belongs to an armed group and thus is eligible for demobilization and reintegration can be a challenging process. Once accepted criteria are now widely repudiated: Neither the possession of a weapon nor a list of members provided by commanding officers can be the sole or even primary criteria. Eligibility based on weapons excludes those who served in non-combat roles (e.g., porters, spies, cooks). It may also exclude women and children combatants, who are vulnerable to efforts by their commanders to manipulate the process in their own favor (for example, taking guns from combatants and giving them to family members to turn in so they can benefit from the DDR program). Lists provided

Pictured from left to right: Major Jack Aalborg, US Air Force and Naval Postgraduate School; Tom Peterman, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies; Major Scott Weston, US Air Force and Naval Postgraduate School; and Major Igor Talcan, Army of Moldova and Naval Postgraduate School.

by commanding officers are subject to similar manipulation, marginalizing female and child soldiers (sometimes out of fear of legal consequences), and also tend not to include those who play support roles (a category which includes some men, but tends to be overwhelmingly populated by children and women).

In response, DDR programs have adopted wider criteria for eligibility: membership in a group. The screening process at the camps examines the validity of individual claims to membership, usually by asking a series of questions about the organization or past battles. In theory, extensive interviewing and the triangulation of information should prevent all but the most well-prepared efforts to gain false entry into the process. In practice, screening and vetting is a challenging art form: It is not unusual for 12 people to process 1,200 individuals a day, As a consequence, DDR implementers are forced to make split-second decisions on who qualifies and in what category (as adult or child). As a subsequent section shows, this is a significant decision since child DDR programs differ in important ways from those for adults.

Mobile Versus Static Sites

Demobilization may take place at mobile sites or larger, semi-permanent camps called cantonment sites. The use of cantonment sites has come under heavy criticism in the academic and policy literature on DDR, in part because of cases where troops have stayed in the camps for up to two years awaiting demobilization and reinsertion. Critics also stress the dangers of concentrating combatants in one area, where boredom and frustration can lead to riots and the power of commanders may be reinforced. In addition, they argue that mobile sites are more effective for armed groups that are not organized as traditional armies but consist instead of more decentralized militias whose members may have already returned to their communities with the signing of peace accords.[3]

> "It is not unusual for 12 DDR implementers to process 1,200 individuals a day. As a consequence, they often are forced to make split-second decisions on who qualifies for aid and in what category, as either an adult or a child."

While stressing the need to keep time in cantonment sites as short as possible (one week to a month), most experienced UN personnel at the workshop expressed a preference for static rather than mobile sites.[4] The cantonment sites provide the space and time for a variety of essential functions to be performed: a thorough interviewing process to collect data and socioeconomic profiles needed for planning future phases of DDR; the provision of information, counseling and referral services, health screening, and pre-discharge awareness raising and sensitization to demobilizing combatants; and an overall processing period that is

At right: Lieutenant Commander Sarah Dachos, US Navy and Naval Postgraduate School, discuss the challenges of processing combatants and determining who should get aid with Rafael Khusnutdinov, Office of Security, Save the Children.

long enough to signify a real divide between military and civilian lives, culminating in symbolically important demobilization ceremonies.

Many of the potential shortcomings of cantonment can be averted or at least ameliorated through careful planning. To keep stays short, cantonment should not begin before demobilization and reinsertion programs are ready. The dangers posed by group living can be reduced by focusing on security and camp organization (e.g., separating men, women, and child soldiers from one another). It is also important to negotiate the location of cantonment sites with the surrounding communities. These sites are often in place for six months at a time, processing a thousand ex-combatants a month and creating constant roving bands of men who pose security risks and generate a demand for prostitution that is often fulfilled by village girls. Negotiations with men and women community leaders to devise ways to reduce these risks and to compensate the community for the inevitable problems that will arise should be priorities for those charged with implementing successful D&D programs.

Reinsertion

Upon demobilization, ex-combatants are provided with reinsertion packages — usually a bucket of supplies and a sum of money — to help provide for their short-term material needs as they are transported to the locations where they will settle. There is widespread agreement that these payments should be designed in a way that will minimize resentment in the general population. Such resentment may inhibit the reintegration of ex-combatants or even provoke instability. As a result, payments should show relative equity with what other war-affected groups are receiving. Labor-intensive quick impact projects, such as those in which ex-combatants are employed alongside others to rebuild community infrastructure, were widely regarded as an appropriate way to provide for ex-combatants as they await reintegration assistance while at the same time providing communities with a "peace dividend."

There is less agreement over whether reinsertion payments should be provided in kind or in cash and, if the latter, whether the money should be provided in a lump sum or installments.[5] Many argue that installment payments can help reduce the chance that the money will be diverted away from the intended recipient. For example, lump-sum cash payments in Afghanistan were turned over to militia leaders, serving only to reinforce and enrich the very command-and-control structures that DDR was intended to dissolve. On the other hand, lump sum payments can permit investment in microenterprises that would not be feasible with installments (or in-kind provisions). To a large extent, the answer will depend on context-specific factors, such as the state of the banking system and the recipient (e.g., women's preferences often diverge from those of men. Children are more vulnerable to manipulation and should not receive cash).

Breaking Old Ties?

Ideally, demobilization should contribute to the disarticulation of the command and control structures responsible for perpetuating violent conflict. For the most part, however, DDR experts felt that the terms of the peace agreement (and successful reintegration) were primarily responsible for shaping success on this front rather than the demobilization process per se. Despite this, workshop participants did stress the importance of analyzing command structures, as a way to validate membership and to hone in on the expectations of participants to shape programs accordingly. Mid-level commanders,

At right: Lejla Mavris discusses the need for flexible DDR approaches that adapt to local realities.

who are usually ignored in the peace agreements, should be provided different packages than rank-and-file soldiers to encourage their demobilization. These actors require special attention as they often have the skills and resources that make them the critical link in remobilizing militarily — or, just as dangerously, in articulating criminal enterprises that can threaten post-conflict societies. Participants also stressed the need to ensure that elements of the demobilization process — for example, cash payments and the setup of cantonment sites — do not reinforce the power of leaders.

The Need for "Flexibility"

One of the guiding principles of the UN DDR program is that it should be "flexible" — a point that was repeatedly stressed by DDR experts at the workshop. "Flexibility" has two components. First, the best practices from the IDDRS should be adapted "to suit the country or region in which they are being implemented."[6] Experts with more than fifteen years of experience implementing DDR in multiple countries emphasized that what works in one country will not necessarily work in another. As one participant put it, "We know what needs to be done, but the challenge is how to do it." In the case of Liberia, for example, experts with experience in Sierra Leone and other neighboring countries recommended measures that failed in the Liberian context. Consulting local groups, including women-led organizations, to ascertain the workability of proposed solutions is essential.

Second, DDR planners should be prepared to adapt and respond to "highly volatile situations and unexpected circumstances."[7] Workshop participants made this point repeatedly: "It's the plan which adapts to reality, not reality to the plan." In one case, demobilizing combatants assumed that they would be allowed to take home the mattress they were using at the cantonment site and became belligerent when they found out this was not the case. A communications strategy focused on managing expectations — explaining very clearly what the participants should expect from DDR and what is expected of them — is critical here, as is monitoring the process closely to identify problematic issues before they explode into riots. ••

> One participant noted: "If reintegration fails, initial disarmament 'success' doesn't really matter." Any gains made in security and stability will likely be undone if marginalized individuals take up arms or turn to crime.

Part II: Reintegration — Best Practices and Lessons Identified

Reintegration is a complex and open-ended process, creating challenges for DDR implementers. For DDR to be sustainable, it must be connected to a wider process of economic reconstruction.

Reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time-frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance. (Secretary-General, note to the General Assembly, A/C.5/59/31, May 2005)

Reintegration is the key to the ultimate success of DDR programs. As one participant noted, "If reintegration fails, initial disarmament 'success' doesn't really matter." Any gains made in security and stability with the initial disarmament and demobilization are likely to be undone as marginalized individuals take up arms again as rebels or turn to crime for their livelihood.

Unfortunately, reintegration is also the most challenging component of DDR programs. Whereas initial disarmament efforts and demobilization are fairly limited in time and scope, reintegration is a complex and open-ended process. While the international community has experienced a number of short-run successes in stabilizing post-conflict countries, longer-term economic reconstruction more often has proven elusive. As one element within the broader strategy of economic recovery, the reintegration of individuals associated with armed forces must overcome daunting challenges. The next section details the challenges posed by reintegration, while the second highlights the response of the international community to these challenges.

Obstacles to Effective Reintegration

Devastated Post-Conflict Economies

Finding sustainable employment and income for ex-combatants is a challenge in devastated post-conflict economies which often lack infrastructure and feature high levels of unemployment, particularly among youth. If reintegration is to be sustainable, it needs to be connected to a wider process of economic reconstruction.

At right: Fernando Calado, Mission in Colombia, International Organization for Migration, shares his perspective on DDR with Ambassador Jacques Paul Klein (Ret.), United Nations Missions in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Liberia.

Lack of Funding

A lack of funding is one of the greatest obstacles to successful reintegration.[8] While D&D programs rely on assessed peacekeeping funds, reintegration programs depend upon voluntary contributions that often never materialize. The timing also works against funding, as reintegration comes into play just when donors are getting fatigued. In the case of Liberia, 10,000 individuals in April 2008 were still awaiting reintegration programs four years after being demobilized. Ideally, most reintegration programs would run for three to five years. In practice, funding delays are commonplace and program managers push hard to get funding for 18 months to three years.

Funding can also be complicated by US and international regulations that prohibit providing funding to terrorist movements. This has proven to be a time-consuming, albeit not insurmountable, obstacle in the demobilization of the paramilitaries in Colombia (where it took two and a half years to resolve the matter), and it is also an issue with the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka.

Formulaic Approaches to Economic Reintegration

Even in cases where the general economic context is more favorable and funding is available, reintegration programs have often failed because of their tendency to rely on formulaic approaches that ignore the realities of local labor markets and the preferences of ex-combatants. Too often, reintegration programs have assumed that ex-combatants will want to resettle in their village of origin and engage in traditional agricultural activities. As one participant noted, "We try to turn everyone into farmers." Women at the workshop joked that DDR programs tried to make them all into basket weavers — ignoring economic realities (e.g., the inability of the market to absorb the flood of baskets produced by program graduates) and the preferences of the women (many of whom, having gained a range of experiences during wartime, did not regard basket making as a satisfying or valuable outlet for their skills). In Afghanistan, a reintegration plan to convert male soldiers to shepherds backfired because women were responsible for tending livestock; not only did the plan fail to reintegrate the men, but it added to the already onerous burden on women.

In most of these cases of formulaic reintegration, a minimal level of cultural awareness and/or consultation with affected groups would have quickly revealed the folly of the proposed plans and permitted a change in course. In too many cases, however, valid complaints from program

> "Ideally, most reintegration programs would run three to five years. In practice, funding delays are commonplace, leading to situations like Liberia, where 10,000 individuals were still awaiting reintegration programs four years after being demobilized."

At right: Dr. Douglas Porch, Naval Postgraduate School, discusses reintegration funding constraints with Sophie da Câmara.

beneficiaries have been ignored, particularly if they surface after the program is already in place. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in contrast, youth associated with armed forces rejected a program to provide them with agricultural training, insisting instead on construction-related occupations. (A national agency devised the agricultural program without assessing employment opportunities in the area; in contrast, the youth were well aware of upcoming opportunities in construction through a government-sponsored local economic development initiative that had been widely promoted in the media.) Program implementers were able to adapt mid-stream, and most of the successful trainees were able to find work building infrastructure for the municipality.[9] Pilot programs that test the viability of different approaches are increasingly advocated and have the clear advantage of increasing receptiveness to feedback.

In sum, DDR programs have tended to offer a limited (and often misguided) menu of vocational options for participants to choose from rather than looking at individuals, the market, and service/employment providers to devise context-appropriate solutions. This tailored approach is not an easy one, but it is increasingly being adopted by the international community (as described in the "Solutions" section below).

Tensions Between Ex-Combatants and Receiving Communities

As the Secretary General's note to the General Assembly observes, reintegration takes place primarily in communities at the local level. Given this, the success of reintegration will depend upon the ability and willingness of local communities to accept former members of armed groups. In many cases, however, these communities may have been devastated by the war and have limited economic and human resources for rebuilding on their own, much less absorbing an influx of ex-combatants.

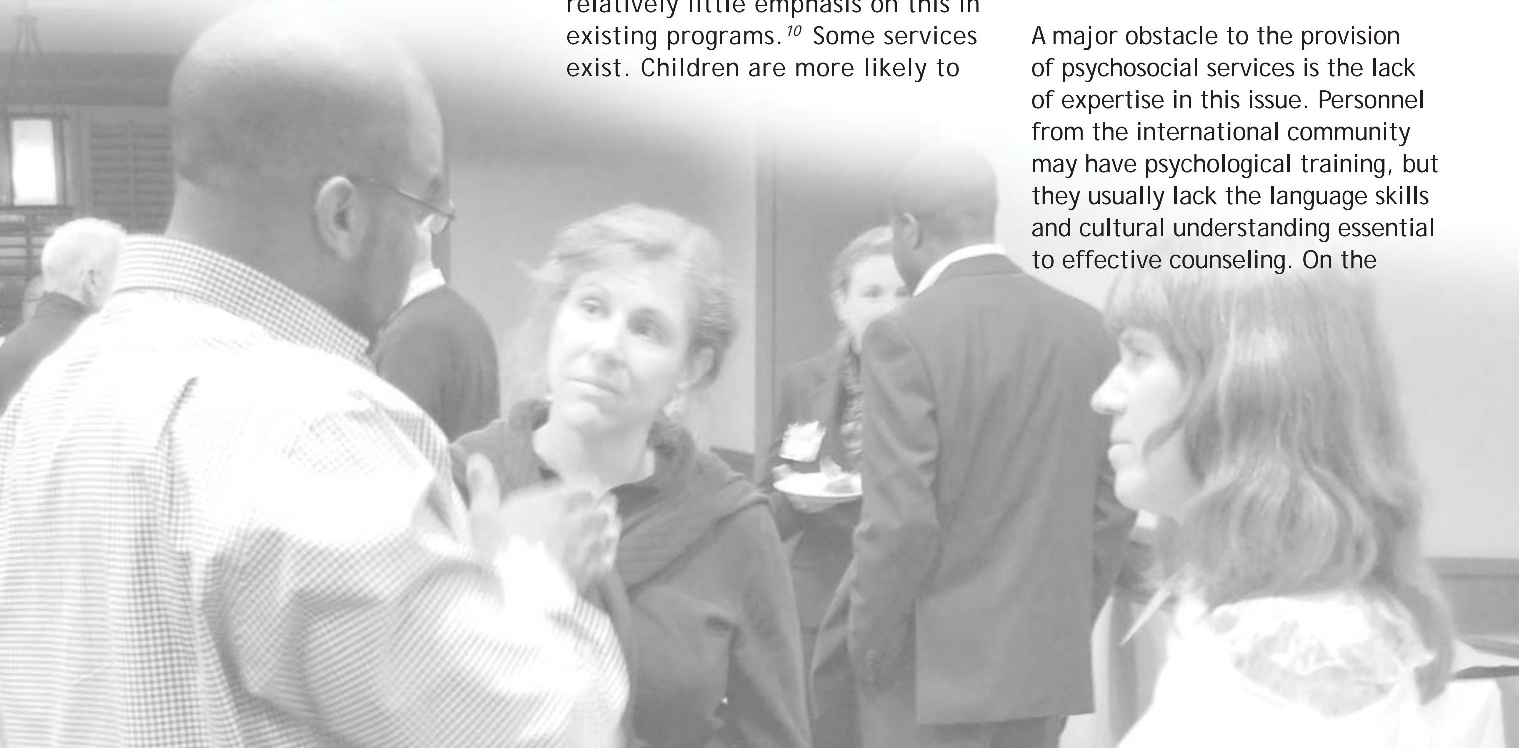
CSRS events afford global practitioners the opportunity to broaden their professional networks and learn about the work of others. At right: Chinenye Dave-Odigie, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, discusses her organization's work with Travis Adkins, Africare.

In some cases, these communities may have suffered abuses by the rebels or blame rebel forces for abuses committed by government forces. Under such circumstances, tensions between ex-members of armed groups and receiving communities can run high. In the competition for scarce resources for reconstruction, communities may resent the aid packages given to individuals whom they blame for their hardships. (Even in communities which are sympathetic to the rebel groups, many are likely to question an inequitable distribution of resources between ex-combatants and communities.) Since the particular shape and severity of these tensions will vary depending upon a number of factors, it is important to consult with receiving communities to understand their attitudes toward, and capacities for, absorption of former members of armed groups.

Lack of Programs Addressing Psycho-Social Dimensions of Reintegration

Workshop participants, many of whom advocate on behalf of groups traumatized by war (e.g., children, victims of sexual and gender-based violence) and/or work in war-affected communities, repeatedly emphasized the need to address the psycho-social dimensions of reintegration. At the same time, presentations at the workshop by DDR experts revealed relatively little emphasis on this in existing programs.[10] Some services exist. Children are more likely to receive psychosocial counseling in interim care centers than adult combatants. Traditional "cleansing ceremonies" contribute to community reconciliation and may help some individuals reintegrate socially; however, there are many more DDR participants in need of individualized counseling.

A major obstacle to the provision of psychosocial services is the lack of expertise in this issue. Personnel from the international community may have psychological training, but they usually lack the language skills and cultural understanding essential to effective counseling. On the



Course presenters discuss the upcoming sessions they will facilitate.

other hand, national personnel with an understanding of culture often lack training in psychology. Recent psychosocial programs in Colombia and Aceh represent exceptions but it is not clear that these are indicative of a broader trend toward incorporating psychosocial support and counseling in DDR programs.[11] Some DDR experts, well aware of past limitations of reintegration programs generally, argued that in practice the most one could hope for is helping former members of armed groups "get back on their feet" economically.

Multiple Actors, Complex Coordination

While disarmament and demobilization tend to be highly centralized operations involving a limited number of specialists, social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants requires the cooperation of a wide range of actors over a longer period of time. The challenge is to devise an integrated approach to synchronize the activities not only of the various actors involved in the different phases of the DDR process, but also the multiple players involved in development, including government agencies, international organizations, and the private sector.

Lack of National Capacity

Economic reintegration and broader economic reconstruction efforts depend heavily upon the policies and actions of the national government at all stages of the program. Since reintegration is an open-ended process that often needs to be carried out after peacekeeping forces have drawn down and international attention and assistance has faded, national capacity becomes even more important with the passage of time. For reintegration to be sustainable, DDR programs should contribute to building national-level capacity and mobilizing community-level resources.

> "DDR experts face the daunting challenge of devising an integrated approach that synchronizes the activities of various actors involved in the different phases of DDR, as well as the myriad players involved in development work."

Existence of Serious Information Gaps

Effective reintegration requires a fine-grained understanding of the labor market and existing training capacities in different localities of the country. As this information is not readily available, it is essential that planning for reintegration begins before or during peace talks (and even be included on the peace agenda).

Solutions

The workshop discussion of reintegration emphasized the

Major Rebecca Crispin, US Special Operations Command Europe, listens intently to Major Igor Talcan, Army of Moldova's perspective on the need for community-based approaches to enrich traditional DDR programs.

importance of developing community-based approaches that complement traditional programs benefiting individuals formerly associated with armed forces. In keeping with this philosophy, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) explained its approach to economic reintegration which not only combines attention to individual and community needs, but also redresses many of the shortcomings with existing approaches outlined above.

Community-Based Approaches

Workshop participants advocated community-based approaches to complement traditional programs that focus solely on the needs of ex-combatants. One way to do this in the short run is to employ ex-combatants in quick-impact projects (e.g., labor-intensive infrastructure repair) that benefit the community. While this win-win approach may not be sustainable, it can provide a much-needed boost to reconciliation in the immediate post-war period. Another approach is to address pressing needs shared by both ex-combatants and the community, for example, creating mobile clinics to provide medical assistance.

Such approaches provide multiple benefits. They avoid creating the perception of rewarding those individuals who contributed to the conflict and provide a "peace dividend" to communities that is essential for post-war reconstruction and reconciliation. They are not only cost-effective but generate public goods that are sorely needed in post-conflict settings. Community-based approaches have the additional benefit of reaching individuals from marginalized groups (e.g., women and children) who were involved in the conflict but who did not participate in the formal DDR program out of fear of being stigmatized or for some other reason.

In addition to providing social services or economic reconstruction assistance to the community, community-based approaches also require the participation of local groups. Since the community is the locus of both economic and social integration, community members and organizations must be consulted to determine both their willingness and ability to incorporate former members of armed

At far right: Nick Tomb, Center for Stabilization and Reconstruction Studies, reviews the workshop's agenda with Kees Steenken (left) and Simon Yazgi (middle).

groups. This information should be used not just to design sensitization campaigns targeting community perceptions but also to shape the content of reintegration programs.

IOM's Approach to Economic Reintegration

Drawing on their extensive experience with reintegration — not just of ex-combatants but also of refugees and displaced persons — the International Organization for Migration has designed a four-pillar approach to economic reintegration that addresses a large number of the challenges outlined above. First, reintegration strategies should be based on information rather than assumptions. Second, individualized referral services replace the traditional, limited menu of vocational training which often does not meet the needs of the ex-combatants nor the labor market. Third, reintegration funds permit flexibility in funding both individual and community-based initiatives. Fourth, the approach stresses the capacity building at the national level that is essential for sustainable reintegration. These four pillars of the Information, Counseling and Referral Services (ICRS) approach are discussed in more detail below:

❶ Assessment, Survey, and Profiling

Ideally, planning for reintegration should begin before or during the peace process with labor market surveys and analysis. Socioeconomic profiles of demobilizing combatants and other DDR beneficiaries (identifying both their needs as well as existing capabilities) can then be matched to job opportunities and be used to determine the type of vocational training programs necessary. Geographical Information Systems mapping can graphically depict gaps between job seekers and job opportunities in areas of resettlement. A reintegration program that assumes combatants will want to return equally to all parts of the country and which distributes its offices accordingly may confront trouble if this is not the case. Caseload mapping that is updated over time helps track the program.

❷ Information, Counseling, and Referral Services

The program provides counseling for DDR beneficiaries to ensure that reintegration solutions are based on informed decision making. Ensuring that participants have realistic expectations of job opportunities is essential to preventing disillusionment. Rather than replicating existing capabilities, the program reaches out to other international or government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, or the business community to provide training and job opportunities. While such a

> "IOM has a four-pillar approach to economic integration that provides assessment, survey, and profiling services; information, counseling, and referral services; and small reintegration grants; while developing local capacity."

Workshop participants heard an array of speakers representing global organizations integrally involved in DDR work.

referral service is labor-intensive, the integrated approach is key to a sustainable reintegration process.

❸ Reintegration Fund

The IOM's reintegration fund provides flexible small grants which may be used by the community, individual DDR beneficiaries, and even businesses (with the permission of the reintegrating individual). The funding of community initiatives facilitates community-based social and economic reintegration, making it a key part of broader community stabilization strategies. The availability of funds to individuals (e.g., start-up money for a micro-enterprise) contributes to the program's overarching theme of providing individually tailored reintegration solutions that are presumably more viable than a limited menu of options that may fit neither the needs of individuals nor the labor market. Finally, outreach to the business community through referral services (above) and the use of flexible small grants for apprenticeships puts a new spin on community-based approaches, making them adaptable to the urban environments that are increasingly the resettlement locations of former members of armed groups.

❹ Capacity Building

Whenever possible, IOM embeds its ICRS operation within the appropriate government ministry or department. The goal is to create a National Employee Referral Service that will contribute to sustainable economic development. Nongovernmental organizations that advocate for women and children, such as The Initiative for Inclusive Security and Save the Children, take a similar approach, working for the creation, inclusion in DDR processes, and strengthening of government ministries for women and the family. ••

> Boys and girls and young men and women between the ages of 15 to 24 are particularly vulnerable to re-recruitment given their limited skills and their marginalized position in society.

Part III: Towards a More Inclusive DDR Process

DDR practitioners seeking to develop a more inclusive approach need to consider the full range of groups affected by conflict, such as female combatants, child soldiers, and support personnel. These groups are often invisible in the DDR process, but have great needs and are vulnerable to re-recruitment.

In the beginning, DDR programs evinced a military-oriented approach that stressed short-term security objectives: commanding officers provided a list of soldiers, who would be disarmed and demobilized and provided with economic assistance packages to prevent them from "spoiling" the peace. With time, however, the shortcomings of this approach became increasingly clear. Female combatants and child soldiers were highly visible members of fighting forces but tended to be invisible in the DDR process: They were underrepresented on commander-generated lists and, to the extent they participated in DDR, their special needs were often left unaddressed. At the same time, it became apparent that a narrow, combat-based view of armed groups neglected to provide for the demobilization and reintegration of the support personnel that in most armies tends to outnumber the fighting component. Women and children comprised the vast majority of these personnel and had their own experiences of the conflict (such as repeated sexual abuse) that needed to be addressed. In addition, women and children dependents of combatants needed to be included in the DDR process if they were to be reintegrated into society. Finally, the growing consensus on the importance of reintegration (as opposed to short-term transitional aid) for ensuring stability led DDR specialists to focus on the special challenges of reintegrating youth. Boys and girls and young men and women between the ages of 15 and 24 are particularly vulnerable to re-recruitment given their limited skills and their marginalized position in society. The following section highlights some of the key dimensions of this more inclusive approach to DDR.

Women, Gender, and DDR

Women are increasingly involved in combat or are associated with armed groups and forces in other roles, work as community peace-builders, and play essential roles in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes. Yet they are almost never included in the planning or implementation of DDR. (IDDRS Framework, Women, Gender and DDR, Section 5.10)

Developing a more inclusive approach to DDR requires practitioners to

At right: Jacqueline O'Neill of The Initiative for Inclusive Security discusses the need for a gender-sensitive approach to DDR and highlights the key contributions women's groups have made to improving the outcomes of DDR processes.

embrace more groups as beneficiaries as well as tend to key issues that had previously been neglected. This includes gender awareness in DDR programs and promoting the role of women as key shapers and implementers of DDR initiatives. In keeping with this, the UN's Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) provides a chart of "gender-aware" and "female-specific" initiatives at each phase of the DDR process: peace negotiations, assessment, planning and design, disarmament, demobilization, transitional support, assembly, cantonment, resettlement, social reintegration, economic reintegration, information and sensitization, and monitoring and evaluation.[12]

For the purposes of this report, "gender-aware" initiatives are broken down into two parts: avoiding gender bias and considering how DDR affects (and is affected by) gender roles. "Female-specific" interventions are also divided into two components: the involvement of women in the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of DDR programs; and catering to the special roles, needs, preferences, and attributes of the women and girls who are beneficiaries of DDR programs.[13] Male and female gender advisers, as well as local women's groups, should be included at each phase of the process.

❶ Avoiding Gender Bias

Many of the "gender-aware" measures listed in the IDDRS are efforts to avoid gender bias in DDR. For example, a labor market assessment should be carried out for both men and women; disarmament programs should ensure equal access to men and women; patterns of weapons possession for men and women should be evaluated; sex-disaggregated data should be collected with demobilization questionnaires; HIV counseling should be provided for men and women (though separate venues may be appropriate); support programs for victims of sexual assaults should target men and boys as well as women and girls; both men and women in receiving communities should be informed of the difficulties ex-combatants will face in reintegrating.

❷ Gender Roles and DDR

Even when they are not involved with armed forces and groups themselves, women are strongly affected by decisions made during the demobilization of men. Furthermore, it is impossible to tackle the problems of women's political, social and economic marginalization or the high levels of violence against women in conflict and post-conflict zones without paying attention to how men's experiences and expectations also shape gender relations. (IDDRS Framework, Women, Gender and DDR, Section 5.10)

Being gender aware also means addressing male gender roles and the impact that the demobilization and reintegration of men will have on women. For example, DDR publicity campaigns should take care not to reinforce images of violent masculinity. Demobilizing men should be encouraged to sign the agreements on how assistance from the transition package should be spent in the presence of their wives and dependents. Men should receive counseling about gender roles and how to find non-violent means to deal with frustrations when expectations about those roles are not met. For example, an ex-combatant may struggle to reintegrate; the resulting frustration with the inability to provide for his family may result in domestic violence. Similarly, ex-combatants may expect their wives to conform to traditional gender roles, even though their roles and thinking may have changed while they tended to the household solo during wartime. In Rwanda, for example, men returned from war to find that women's roles had been transformed during their absence. Preparing a

At right: Ambassador Jacques Paul Klein (Ret.) shares insights from his work at multiple United Nations missions.

demobilizing male combatant for these possibilities, and providing tools to cope with them, is essential for reducing the incidence of domestic violence, which often is a serious problem in the reintegration phase. In short, demobilizing male combatants need counseling not only on how their peacetime roles will differ from warfighting roles, but also how their roles at home may differ from what they were previously. Managing expectations — a task which is central to the success of DDR under circumstances of uncertainty and volatility — applies as well to gender relations.

❸ An Important Role for Women in Formulating, Implementing, and Monitoring DDR

As US Ambassador to Angola immediately after the signing of the peace agreement, Don Steinberg insisted that women be involved as planners, implementers, and beneficiaries for humanitarian and reconstruction assistance programs under the guidance, "Nothing about us without us."

Gender-responsive DDR acknowledges that women should be consulted in the creation, execution, and oversight of DDR programs. Women — like all other beneficiaries of DDR programs — need to be consulted if non-formulaic programs that meet the needs of their recipients are to be designed. Women's experiences with and roles in conflict often differ from those of men; their willingness and ability to participate in D&D programs are likely to be hindered in a number of ways that men's participation is not; and reintegration is often hindered by the requirements of care-giving, restricted gender roles and rights, and other female-specific factors. (See the next section on "Women and girls as beneficiaries of DDR" for a more complete discussion.)

DDR processes are more likely to be gender responsive in their design if women are included from the earliest stages. Although women have typically been excluded from peace negotiations, their inclusion in the recent Darfur peace talks produced an (unimplemented) agreement in 2005 that was a model of gender sensitivity. Women's groups should be included on national DDR commissions, including government ministries for women's affairs and women's peace-building networks. In addition, women play a key role in the implementation of DDR, as they are often in a better position than men to communicate with other women and understand their needs. For this reason, workshop participants stressed the need for more female soldiers in UN peacekeeping forces and particularly at cantonment sites. DDR teams should employ female interpreters to increase the chance that demobilizing women will freely communicate their needs and concerns during the demobilization process. Women who have chosen to self-reintegrate might be consulted to assess the incentives and/or obstacles to female demobilization. Women's groups and female community leaders have also played

> "Nothing about us without us."
>
> — Don Steinberg, US Ambassador, Angola, speaking about the inclusion of women in the DDR process.

At right: Rich Hoffman, Center for Civil-Military Relations; Alexandra Courtney, Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, US Agency for International Development; and Dr. Douglas Porch.

key roles in information campaigns to make women aware of DDR.

Since women make up at least half the adult population, and in post-conflict situations may head up to 75 percent of all households, the involvement of women in DDR and SSR [security sector reform] is the most important factor in achieving effective and sustainable security. Furthermore, as the main caregivers in most cultures, women and girls shoulder more than their fair share of the burden for the social reintegration of male and female ex-combatants, especially the sick, traumatized, injured, HIV-positive and under-aged. (IDDRS Framework, Women, Gender and DDR, Section 5.10)

More broadly, women's inclusion at all stages of the DDR process is justified by the important roles they play in post-conflict societies as caregivers, community organizers mediators, and activists. Women possess a wealth of the context-specific information — not just about women but about local conditions — that is vital to the success of DDR and the transition to sustained peace. For example, they may have information on the number of combatants, the existence of arms caches, or the best locations for a cantonment site that is helpful for assessment and planning. They can help to raise awareness for disarmament programs, among both male and female members of the population, and contribute to monitoring the disarmament process within their communities. As key players within the community, they are particularly important for processes of reintegration. Women's groups and female community leaders must be consulted to determine and shape community attitudes toward reintegration and to enumerate and mobilize the community resources available to facilitate both economic and social reintegration. Women's groups also often play key roles in monitoring community developments and can assist in holding both traditional authorities and international organizations accountable for meeting the needs of the community.

"Women possess a wealth of context-specific information — not just about women but about local conditions — that is vital to the success of DDR and the transition to sustained peace."

❹ Women and Girls as Beneficiaries of DDR

Women and girls play a variety of roles in armed conflict — as fighters, supporters in non-combat roles (e.g., porters, spies, cooks) and as dependents of male combatants. As a result, advocates of a gender-responsive DDR program have stressed the need for eligibility criteria that are not based on the possession of a weapon or the list of member names provided by commanders (which would not include support personnel

At right: Jebbeh Forster, UN Development Fund for Women, offers her views on how to ensure the fair inclusion of women in DDR programs.

and might even exclude female combatants). Instead, a number of other screening mechanisms — such as questions about the group's command structure or battles — are used to determine if women have knowledge that would establish their participation in the group.

Even with these more inclusive eligibility criteria, women tend to under-enroll in DDR programs. One important reason may be a lack of information about these programs and the perception that possession of a weapon is a requirement for participation. Public relations campaigns to make women aware of these programs need to address the fact that, in many countries, women tend not to rely on radio and newspapers as their main sources of information. Campaigns using other women to spread the word in face-to-face meetings have often proven to be a necessary complement to ads in more traditional media.

Women may also choose not to participate in DDR programs because of concerns about their safety in cantonment sites or the need to tend to children and households. In these cases, the use of mobile sites (or a network of offices distributed throughout the country) may boost rates of female participation. Introducing appropriate security measures at cantonment sites and programs that address women's health needs (and advertising their availability to the target audience) should increase women's willingness to participate. The employment of female workers at cantonment sites may expand the extent to which women's needs are addressed and is likely to enhance women's comfort levels. Provisions should be made for "war wives" to be processed separately from their male companions at cantonment sites, in an effort to allow them to make independent decisions about whether to reintegrate on their own or not.

Reinsertion packages, designed to provide short-term material assistance before reintegration programs begin, may also need to be handled differently for women. Many women may prefer to receive their payments in installments, to avoid the security risk of carrying large sums of cash on their persons. To increase the likelihood that reinsertion monies provided to men will actually go the care of their families, the UN's IDDRS suggests some innovative strategies, including having ex-combatants receive information about and sign for dependent benefits in the presence of their families.

Finally, economic and social reintegration poses key challenges for women. Economically, traditional gender roles and limited rights for women, especially in terms of land ownership and access to capital, pose hurdles to reintegration not present for men. Women's role as caregivers may block their participation in vocational training and other reintegration programs; DDR programs should have provisions for child care or other measures that would allow increased women's participation. At the same time, reintegration funds for house construction or to start up a microenterprise might be appropriate responses to women's need to work out of the home.

Socially, women who have been traumatized by sexual or gender-based violence may have a hard time readjusting. They may be rejected by communities, especially if they have children fathered by the "enemy," or may even need individual counseling to accept children born of rape. Other women, for whom conflict was more a period of empowerment than denigration, may face different challenges in reintegrating into a society that expects them to conform to traditional gender roles. For both sets of women, support groups made up of women formerly in armed groups

At right: Deborah Barry, Save the Children, discusses the challenges of reintegrating child soldiers into a post-conflict society.

may be particularly important outlets for social reintegration. These groups have the added advantage of reaching women who may not have gone through the formal DDR process.

Children and Youth Associated with Armed Forces

There is a growing international consensus that the forced or compulsory recruitment of children — girls and boys under the age of 18 — and their use in hostilities by both armed forces and armed groups is illegal and one of the worst forms of child labour. The recruitment and use of children under 15 is a war crime. (IDDRS)

The recruitment of children is illegal and efforts to prevent this and to demobilize child soldiers must be actively carried out at all times. Such efforts should occur before, during, and after peace talks and should not be contingent upon the progress of peace talks or the adult DDR program. While this ongoing effort requires a constant presence of child advocacy groups on the ground, their vigilance should be increased in the lead-up to a peace treaty. During this time period, commanders of armed groups, fearing International Criminal Justice Court charges for the use of child soldiers, are likely to release children in the bush (or worse) prior to formal demobilization; an early presence of international organizations could preempt violent measures and respond to the outflow of child soldiers.

Many features of the DDR process must be modified to take into account the special needs and circumstances of children associated with armed forces. First, the possession of weapons or knowledge of how to operate weapons should not be criteria for children's participation in the process. As with the suggested eligibility criteria for women, this acknowledges the fact that many children serve support roles and are not actual combatants. Second, it is widely agreed that children should not receive cash payments during the demobilization phase.[14] Commanders are in a position to manipulate the process, either taking the cash payment from the children or sending their own young relatives to participate in the program in place of child soldiers.

Third, every effort should be made to minimize children's stay in cantonment sites to 48 hours or less on their way to interim care centers. While at the sites, child soldiers should be physically separated from adults and their security guaranteed. (Children of members of the armed forces, on the other hand, should remain with their families at the cantonment sites.) Girls who are "war wives" should be separated from the men and given a choice of resettling on their own or with a companion.

Fourth, since children cannot be legally mobilized, they do not go through the same symbolic demobilization process as adults. Rather, after being "released" from armed groups, children are placed in interim care centers where they undergo a process of rehabilitation including psychosocial interventions designed to facilitate "crossing the bridge" from their former lives to a new one.[15] While there, the groundwork is laid for the longer-term process of reintegration. In some cases, family tracing allows for children to be reunited with their families.

In many cases, children face special challenges resuming "normal" lives and integrating into communities. In some cases, children may have become vulnerable to recruitment because they ran away from abusive homes and may not want to return there. In other cases, children have been abducted by an armed group and forced to watch or participate in atrocities against their own

Pictured from left to right: Alexandra Courtney and Lyla Bashan, Office for the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stabilization, US Department of State.

families and communities as a way to prevent them from being able to desert and return home. Perhaps even more so than for other combatants, successful reintegration for children depends upon an on-going dialogue with the receiving community to understand their attitudes toward returning children.

Finally, while reintegration for adults focuses on vocational training, most child soldiers opt to resume their education. Those who are not interested in this option — as is more often the case with older boys and girl mothers — should be offered alternative ways to participate as citizens. Programs teaching life skills and vocational skills would be appropriate for these groups; incorporating the teaching of some of these skills (for example, parenting skills) into the regular school curriculum would benefit child soldiers who have chosen the more traditional reintegration route as well as the broader population of children affected by war.

Sustainable reintegration also requires specific attention to capacity building; child advocacy groups often work to create or strengthen government ministries dealing with the welfare of the family and/or children.

As with other reintegration programs, community-based approaches are strongly advocated to complement the services provided on an individual case basis to former child soldiers.

Broad-based community programs address the overlapping needs of child soldiers and children affected by conflict; help target the root causes of child recruitment; and reduce the resentment produced by targeted assistance to child soldiers. In addition, community-based approaches help reach child soldiers who have, by choice or circumstance, not enrolled in the DDR process. There are a wide range of reasons that child soldiers may remain "invisible" during the DDR process. These rationales include the wish to avoid the stigma of being associated with an armed group; the trauma of having been a victim of sexual violence; or parental concerns over how participation in DDR will affect their child's future work and marriage eligibility.

> "The challenge now is for agencies to respect the right of children to remain 'invisible' by refining their delivery of broad-based community programmes, while continuing to ensure that service delivery and advocacy continue to meet the needs of individual cases without making it widely known."
>
> – Save the Children

Youth

For a variety of reasons, DDR programs need to tailor socio-economic reintegration strategies to the special needs of young ex-

At right: Kees Steenken, Swedish National Defence College.

combatants and youth in general (defined by the United Nations as individuals between 15 and 24 years of age).[16] In many countries, this age group tends to be the most vulnerable to violence, disease (e.g., HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse), and marginalization. Ex-combatants are particularly vulnerable since they spent their formative years in armed groups, where they not only missed out on "normal" educational and socialization experiences but also are likely to have engaged in drug use, sexual activity, and violent behavior that puts them at risk. In post-conflict societies, youth pose a high security risk as the vast majority of those re-recruited fall between the ages of 15 and 30. Despite stereotypes of female docility, the vulnerability to re-recruitment is not limited to young men; for this reason, reintegration programs targeting the specific needs of young women are necessary as well.

The economic reintegration of young ex-combatants is often ill-served by the menu of programs offered to children and adults. While ex-combatants under 18 are children according to international legal norms, they may have assumed roles as parents and caregivers that render inadequate the reintegration programs designed for children and youth associated with armed forces. One participant noted, for example, that the policy of no cash payments to children is simply not tenable in Uganda where a significant number of 15- to 18-year-old combatants have families to support. At the same time, adult reintegration programs focus on vocational training that ignores the young ex-combatants' need for remedial education. The high rates of unemployment for young people and child labor laws limiting work for those under the age of 18 also pose special challenges for the economic reintegration of young ex-combatants.

> "Whereas combat-weary older combatants often welcome the return to their families and a 'normal life,' many young combatants neither have a 'normal life' as a reference point nor do they possess the skills necessary for such a life."

As important as economic integration is the social reintegration of young ex-combatants. A series of factors make this a much more difficult process for younger combatants than for their older counterparts. Whereas combat-weary older combatants often welcome the return to their families and a "normal life," many young combatants neither have a "normal life" as a reference point nor do they possess the skills necessary for such a life. They may need to learn impulse control for the first time and must adjust to dealing with authority and older generations. The disparity between the power and status they had as gun-wielding combatants and their relatively marginalized position in post-conflict society is often great. Providing support structures and opportunities to exercise leadership within their community, for example in sports clubs or other local organizations, may provide a useful antidote.

Finally, all marginalized youth, and not just ex-combatants, are at high risk of recruitment into armed or criminal groups; ex-combatant and civilian youth needs can be met simultaneously through community-based reintegration programs. ••

> "Reintegration programs for demobilizing individuals must be grounded in information and consultation and tailored to local needs; in contrast, formulaic approaches that offer a limited menu of vocational training have failed repeatedly."

Conclusion

To contribute to a sustainable peace, DDR programs must consider the needs of all affected groups and adopt best practices to address realities on the ground. Meanwhile, reintegration must be tailored to local needs and opportunities.

In recent years, veterans of DDR processes have worked hard to identify lessons learned from their past experiences and highlight best practices. It is now widely accepted that if DDR programs are to contribute to a sustainable peace, they must be attentive to the needs of all involved groups, including women, children and youth. The relatively straightforward processes of disarmament and demobilization are complicated by the volatility and uncertainty that dominates in the early stages of the peace process. The need to adapt best practices to the realities on the ground is widely asserted but is made difficult by the international community's tendency to bring in outside experts and to treat disarmament and demobilization as a logistical challenge that can be resolved with top-down planning processes. In contrast, consultation with women's and community groups, during the early stage of the process, has proven crucial to introducing much needed "flexibility" into DDR prescriptions.

Similarly, DDR experts now acknowledge that women's groups and other stakeholders at both the community and national level need to be mobilized and incorporated into the process if reintegration is to be sustainable. Reintegration programs for demobilizing individuals must be grounded in information and consultation and tailored to particular needs and opportunities; in contrast formulaic approaches that offer a limited menu of vocational training have failed repeatedly. The tailored approach to reintegration is based on outreach to the variety of actors (governmental, national, community-based, international, business) necessary for sustainable economic reintegration, seeking both to build on existing capacity and to build capacity. Finally, community-based programs are essential for creating communities both willing and able to absorb ex-combatants and able to participate in a broader process of economic reconstruction in a post-conflict setting.

At right: A workshop participant and Lieutenant Colonel Denis Sevaistre Army of France, NATO School, North Atlantic Treaty Organization talk about how to tailor reintegration approaches to meet local needs.

Endnotes

1 The UN Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) represent a key, comprehensive source. Released on 18 December 2006, the Standards reflect two years of work in headquarters and the field by the United Nations' 15-member Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. The lengthy IDDRS is accompanied by an Operational Guide to the IDDRS, which summarizes each module and provides links to more detailed information in the full-length IDDRS, and a Briefing Note for Senior Managers, which condenses the Standards to a 12-page memo. All are available at www.unddr.org. Other groups undertook critical reviews of DDR practices in parallel to the UN review. For example, see the Stockholm Initiative on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (SIDDR) which ran from November 2004 to November 2005. (Working papers and final documents are available at http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/4890.)

2 The United Nations is currently working on additional chapters for the IDDRS, one of which will focus on the relationship between peace treaties and DDR.

3 See Sami Faltas, "DDR Without Camps: The Need for Decentralized Approaches," Topical Chapter for the Conversion Survey (BICC), December 2004. Available at http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/06/54/02/5d16fcf2.pdf.

4 See pp. 145-46 of the Operational Guide to the IDDRS for a chart comparing the pros and cons of static and mobile sites. Although the IDDRS does not favor one approach over another, many DDR practitioners prefer static sites because of their past experience with this approach, the ease of logistics which permits more thorough information gathering and counseling, and the symbolism of the demobilization ceremonies carried out at static sites.

5 See, for example, Jeffrey Isima, "Cash Payments in Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programmes in Africa," *Journal of Security Sector Management*, Volume 2, No. 3, September 2004.

6 IDDRS, Operational Guidelines, p. 28.

7 Ibid.

8 Funding is such a problem that it was one of the three issues focused on by the Stockholm Initiative for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (SIDDR) in 2004-2005. See "Review of International Financing Agreements for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Phase 2 Report," available at http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/06/54/02/ee028ddc.pdf.

9 See ILO, p. 36.

10 The IDDRS notes that "psychosocial support and counselling … is an essential, but often overlooked, component of DDR" (IDDRS 8.3.2). Only two paragraphs are devoted to this in the 700+ page IDDRS.

11 The Colombian Government's demobilization of paramilitaries includes a strong psychosocial component but the widespread availability of Colombian psychiatrists and the amount of resources per demobilizing combatant (approximately $15,000 versus an average of $1000 in other programs) is not likely to be replicated in most countries. A more relevant example might be IOM's program in Aceh which has a "groundbreaking psychosocial component" that addresses the needs of both ex-combatants and the community. See IOM Indonesia, "Post-Conflict Reintegration Programme in Aceh: Building a Lasting Peace." IOM PCRP Fact Sheet, August 2006. Available at http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/brochures_and_info_sheets/id20060801_1_en.pdf.

12 The summary Operational Guideline includes some phases (e.g., information and sensitization, monitoring and evaluation) that are not discussed in the full Framework.

13 These four categories are used to highlight issues that might be obscured by the UN's two broad categories. In particular, the UN's classification of women's involvement in DDR as a "female-specific" measure implies that any benefits from women's involvement will redound specifically to females; this belies the importance of women's involvement for the overall success of DDR programs and not just the parts that target women. (While the Introduction to the module on Women, Gender, and DDR in the full IDDRS Framework acknowledges the importance of women's participation, no mention is made of this in the Operational Guidelines.)

14 For a variety of reasons, child soldiers in Liberia were given cash payments for demobilization. Since any child showing up claiming to be a child combatant would be eligible for the funds (and was not required to forfeit a weapon), commanders began sending their own children and excluded the real child soldiers. See Refugees International, "Liberia: Payments to Disarmed Child Soldiers Create Protection Problems."

15 Jareg, "Crossing Bridges and Negotiating Rivers."

16 See IDDRS, 5.20 Youth and DDR; and USAID, "Youth and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention."

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Internet Resources

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- Small Arms Survey website, DDR section: http://hei.unige.ch/sas/files/portal/spotlight/disarmament/ddr.html.

- United Nations, Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS). Full Framework, Operational Guidelines, and Briefing Note for Senior Managers. Available at www.unddr.org.

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