

SOLLIMS Report: Lessons on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

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SOLLIMS Report: Lessons on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

1. Purpose: This lesson report presents a selection of lessons on DDR drawn from the SOLLIMS database (<https://sollims.pksoi.org>). The conclusion provides the key takeaways and a number of additional insights on DDR, along with their source documents. Additionally, an annex offers DDR references and resources.

2. Lessons:

a. DDR as a Component of Security Sector Reform

Observation.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) does not come about by accident; it requires foresight, detailed planning, adequate resourcing, and continuous assessment. Indicators for success need to be closely monitored and the window of opportunity exploited once it presents itself.

Discussion.

DDR plays a critical role in the restoration of lasting peace and stability, paving the way for Security Sector Reform (SSR). DDR needs to be preceded by a comprehensive peace process involving all the warring factions. The DDR program must be sufficiently sponsored/supported at the outset, because it is manpower intensive and resource consuming. In launching and executing the program, broad-based notifications/announcements about the DDR program are essential; key avenues are the media, social networks, advocacy groups, churches, and governmental leadership at all levels.

The emphasis during Demobilization and Disarmament needs to be on the accountability of ex-combatants, their weapons, their exact numbers, and their disposition. Special attention must be placed on the locations of mines/ minefields, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and bomb-making materials. In the case of mines/minefields, this has oftentimes proven difficult because they were unmarked, and ex-combatants did not have relevant maps to use as references. The emphasis during Reintegration is still on ex-combatants, however, an array of resources/actors must become involved – social workers, psychologists, the judiciary, and other independent bodies – in order to ensure that the process is transparent, open, and fair.

Synchronization of all DDR policies, plans, programs, and messaging is critical from the outset. For DDR to be successful, it needs to be first coordinated at the highest possible level – involving the warring factions (as feasible), the Special

Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG), political leadership, UN agencies, government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, social welfare services, and – perhaps most importantly – donors. Without proper funding from the UN and other international donors, implementation of DDR may not be possible.

The involvement of other UN resources – armed troop contingents, military observers, and UN civilian police – is also crucial, especially for the provision of security at demobilization centers/assembly areas. Communication sources/resources and the synchronization of DDR messages – through the HN government, the cooperation of media, advocacy groups including churches, and civil society groups – cannot be over emphasized. Once elements of warring factions have indicated some interest / presented a window of opportunity, reinforcement of the messages and assurances of trust become even more important.

The most critical challenge to DDR is winning the hearts and minds of combatants to volunteer for the program, and this is only achieved through building trust and establishing appropriate facilities and services. Without thorough logistic support, DDR implementation may prove difficult. Provision of favorable living conditions and recreational facilities at assembly areas can be a catalyst for DDR success. However experience has shown that former combatants do not want to stay at assembly areas for an extended timeframe. Reintegrating them back into communities as early as possible is preferable, whereas keeping them longer than necessary creates additional logistics and security requirements. Also, without the provision of services in the form of life skills/employment training, social support structures, professional counseling, truth and reconciliation measures, and resettlement assistance, the chances of successful reintegration have been limited.

Again, DDR does not come about without extensive stakeholder involvement. It requires careful planning, sufficient resourcing, and continuous monitoring and assessment. Indicators for success need to be closely monitored and the window of opportunity exploited once it presents itself.

Recommendations

1. Coordinate DDR concepts/efforts at the highest possible level. Involve the warring factions (if feasible), the Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG), host nation political leadership, government agencies, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (as applicable), social welfare services, and donors.
2. Maximize and synchronize DDR communication efforts – through government offices, the media, advocacy groups, civil society groups, and public forums. Build trust and maintain this trust.

Implications.

Without support from the highest levels of government and without the involvement of the society, advocacy groups, donors, and other interested parties, DDR will not be successful.

Without winning the hearts and minds and establishing long-lasting trust, DDR cannot be successful. Therefore, all promises made to ex-combatants like resettlement, truth and reconciliation, social support, and employment training should be met; otherwise, ex-combatants will feel betrayed and may again resort to fighting.

Event Description.

This lesson was based on classroom readings and past experiences by students discussed during a U.S. Army War College PKSOI elective course on Security Sector Reform.

Lesson Author: COL Joseph Seelo (Botswana).

b. DDR and the Need for Socioeconomic Development for Success

Observation.

Practical experience of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs shows that the DDR process mostly fails during the reintegration phase. The long term success for DDR is highly dependent on development and the existence of economic alternatives for demobilized ex-combatants. Reintegration must manage the future of ex-combatants and depends on education and training opportunities and supporting development programs. While disarmament and demobilization concentrate on short term security, reintegration must be focused on a long term development approach.

Discussion.

DDR is a very complex process dealing with the post-conflict security problems arising from combatants who are left without perspective during the transition phase from conflict to peace, recovery, and development. The objective of a DDR process is to contribute to security and stability in this post-conflict environment. Disarming and demobilization of combatants is a very visible and political process and creates a positive short term effect in the peace process. Demobilization also encompasses transitional assistance to cover immediate basic needs of ex-combatants (food, clothes, shelter, medical services, and short term provision of employment tools).

However, the reintegration process is a long term development process whereby ex-combatants regain civilian status based on sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is a socioeconomic process and primarily takes place at the community level. Reintegration needs national ownership, must be an integral part of the country's development process, and has to be supported by long term outside assistance. Experience has shown that a failed DDR process stalls the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process and severely hampers the peace process.

For a successful process, DDR has to be nested within a sound justice and rule of law system, accompanied by political, military, security, humanitarian, and socioeconomic dimensions of development. DDR has to create incentives for former commanders and combatants to enter negotiations, facilitate political reconciliation, dissolve belligerent force structures, and present opportunities for former combatants to return to their communities.

DDR can provide former combatants with certain cultural skills; however, the opportunities for sustainable reintegration have to be provided by the local community. The aim of DDR must therefore be twofold:

- First, it should prepare the high risk group of former combatants with civilian life skills to prepare them for sustainable social and economic reintegration.
- Secondly, DDR has to help build national capacities, including the justice and rule of law system, in order to assist and enable societies to offer opportunities for reintegration of former combatants.

Communities struggling with economic shortfalls, weak rule of law, an insecure environment, and a lack of social well-being will not have the internal power and social coherence to integrate former combatants successfully. In short, societies receiving former combatants must be prepared in parallel and supported over an extended period of time. Successful reintegration can only happen within a resilient community. Lack of consultation and support to communities could, as a consequence, create socioeconomic tensions and jeopardize reintegration and DDR as a whole.

Recommendations

1. DDR must be planned and coordinated within the wider framework of the peace process and integrated into the process of national capacity-building, reconstruction, and development. The focus of DDR has to be shifted towards reintegration, along with development and capacity-building within the host community.
2. The planning of the reintegration phase has to start at an early stage and must be coordinated with humanitarian assistance efforts and long term development and capacity-building programs.

3. The reintegration process requires sustained international support. Reintegration programs must be adequately resourced from the beginning with a long term focus. Successful reintegration requires sustained commitment of financial and technical assistance for a prolonged time by international actors and donors.

4. Reintegration requires preparing and convincing the host communities to accept ex-combatants into their neighborhoods. The receiving communities must be properly informed, economically prepared, and in a position to offer employment opportunities for ex-combatants.

Implications.

If there is no socioeconomic development, the reintegration process has no basis to succeed and is most likely to fail. Ex-combatants might decide to leave the DDR process and turn to criminal activity or join insurgent groups to support themselves if they cannot find profitable employment.

Event Description.

This lesson was developed for a U.S. Army War College PKSOI Elective Course on Security Sector Reform.

Lesson Author: COL Rudolf Zauner (Austria).

c. Essential Factors for DDR Programs to Achieve Success (Experiences from Africa)

Observation.

Four factors have emerged as being essential for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs to succeed, according to certain case studies in Africa. Those factors are: (1) the will for peace, (2) coordinated implementation of DDR with other conflict resolution tools, (3) addressing the pitfalls of structural and cultural violence, and (4) sustaining push and pull drivers through rewards, persuasion, and coercion.

Discussion.

Two case studies of DDR programs in Africa highlight the importance of certain factors to the overall outcome (success/failure) of the program. In the case of the Central African Republic, DDR over the 2008-2012 timeframe failed miserably – as a will for peace among conflict parties was non-existent, and little attention was given to coordinating DDR with other programs. In contrast, in the case of Sierra Leone, DDR over the 1994-2004 timeframe was a resounding success – with a strong will for peace at the outset and continued attention to addressing

the “pitfalls of structural and cultural violence.” To explain these terms upfront, “pitfalls of structural violence” refers to environments of social, political, and economic discrimination, and “pitfalls of cultural violence” refers to instances of injustice affecting cultural groups. In both DDR cases, “push and pull drivers” played a key role as well. “Push drivers” are intra-group issues such as poor leadership, appalling living conditions, lack of medical care, psychological pressure, lack of future prospects, etc. – pushing people to leave a combatant group/lifestyle. “Pull drivers” are incentives such as power-sharing, amnesty, better living conditions, prospects for the future, etc. – pulling people into the DDR program.

For the Central African Republic, the Global Peace Accord of 2008 provided the foundation for the internationally supported DDR program of the government. The Accord called for initiation of an Inclusive Political Dialogue, Security Sector Reform (SSR), reintegration of ex-combatants, and amnesty for combatants who complete DDR. However, the will for peace was absent. Certain rebel leaders saw the Inclusive Political Dialogue and participation in SSR as their chance to push the government’s leader, Francois Bozize, out of power. He himself was unwilling to compromise, with no intention of sharing power with those he referred to as “gangsters, presenting themselves as the opposition.” Bozize’s government lacked legitimacy and had little reach outside the capital; the security situation in the northern part of the country was especially volatile – inhibiting disarmament; and, some of the groups who had signed the Accord would not follow through with participation in disarmament. Bozize, fearing a coup, refused to implement SSR plans; he blocked the reintegration of any rebels into the FACA (Army). His government confiscated the bulk of donor funding and would not invest any funds to address the pitfalls of structural violence in the depressed northern part of the country. Only 1,400 of the targeted 8,000 combatants actually disarmed. Some who did, however, proceeded to buy new weapons with the money they’d received for turning in the old weapons. Overall, the lack of a “will for peace” among both Bozize and the conflict parties sabotaged the DDR program, not to mention the total failure of Bozize/government to carry out SSR in conjunction with DDR, their total failure to address pitfalls of structural violence in the north, and their failure to meaningfully address push and pull factors such as power-sharing, amnesty, and prospects for the future.

For Sierra Leone, the Lome Peace Accord of 1999 provided the foundation for the internationally supported DDR program of the government. It called for power-sharing, amnesty, and the transformation of one of the two combatant groups (the RUF) into a political party. By and large, the RUF displayed a strong will for peace at the outset. Amnesty, political participation, and prospects of better living conditions were pull drivers that influenced their will for peace. Nevertheless, as disarmament activities began, several RUF elements refused to disarm, as the RUF’s leader was not on board with the process. Fortunately, “push drivers” materialized in the form of British intervention as well as certain West African nations pressuring the RUF leader to step down – facilitating the resumption of disarmament activities. The government of Sierra Leone smartly

linked DDR with SSR, and if personnel from the RUF and the CDF (another combatant group) met specific criteria, they were allowed to join the rebuilt Sierra Leone armed forces. Besides the armed forces, the government also rebuilt/invested in the police, schools, water supply, and health/medical system. Special emphasis was placed on rural, structurally weak areas. This paid huge dividends. Overall, 72,000 combatants were disarmed, most (71,000) were demobilized, and 63,500 went through the reintegration program. The reintegration program included a \$200 starter kit and provision of basic education, vocational training, or agricultural internship – depending on the ex-combatant's background. Many gained employment on public works projects. In conjunction with SSR and DDR, the government implemented additional conflict resolution tools such as a truth and reconciliation commission and special court for Sierra Leone. Overall, the initial strong “will for peace” was a major factor in the success of the DDR program – largely generated by drivers of power-sharing, creation of a political party, and amnesty. Additionally, the DDR-SSR linkage, the coordinated use of/linkage with other conflict resolution tools, actions taken to address pitfalls of structural and cultural violence (through prioritization of rural areas, reconciliation efforts, etc.), and sustained use of push and pull drivers (persuasion, rewards, etc.) were highly contributory to DDR success.

Recommendations

1. Work for a political solution upfront. Ensure the will for peace is addressed/emphasized during peace accord negotiations. Involve all conflict parties. Strengthen the will for peace among them through incentives and projections for a better future. In the political solution, make arrangements for participation/inclusion, as well as steps to improve legitimacy of the host nation government.
2. Ensure that DDR is coordinated with SSR and other conflict resolution tools (e.g., truth and reconciliation systems) utilized by the host nation government and supported by actors from the international community.
3. Prioritize efforts to address the pitfalls of structural and cultural violence – especially through investment and capacity-building in structurally weak or depressed areas.
4. Ensure that push and pull drivers for ex-combatants are identified upfront, and then periodically assess whether these factors are effectively contributing to DDR progress, or whether additional rewards, persuasion, and coercion activities need to be implemented.
5. Hold the government's feet to the fire with regard to external funding for DDR – only provide a bit at a time, and if not used properly, then provide no additional funding.

Implications.

If these factors are not given proper attention – (1) the will for peace, (2) coordinated implementation of DDR with other conflict resolution tools, (3) addressing the pitfalls of structural and cultural violence, and (4) sustaining push and pull drivers – then DDR is not likely to be successful. Above all, there must be a will for peace among the conflict parties (ex-combatants, government/military, etc.). The will for peace must be instilled/emphasized upfront, and it must be sustained throughout the DDR process and throughout the duration of stabilization and reconstruction activities.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the article “[Successful Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration for Sustainable Peace](#),” by Patrick Tuffer, www.offiziere.ch, 14 October 2015.

Lesson Author: David Mosinski (U.S.).

d. Lessons from Liberia in Security Sector Reform

Observation.

Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) actions launched in Liberia at its “golden hour” (mid-2003 to 2005) were absolutely critical for post-conflict recovery and for establishing a viable foundation for further stabilization work. Although every peacebuilding context presents its own set of unique and complex challenges, certain key areas of action addressed within the Liberian security sector may also be applicable to wider peacebuilding efforts, particularly for nations recovering from an abrupt end to a civil war. Key areas of action successfully implemented in Liberia revolved around consolidating the state's monopoly of force, maintaining the momentum of peacebuilding, integrating SSR with DDR, operationalizing human security, and mobilizing networks for peace.

Discussion.

Upon the conclusion of its 14-year civil war, in August 2003, Liberia faced an incredibly difficult situation with regard to post-conflict peacebuilding. From a pre-war population of three million, more than 250,000 people had been killed, and another one million people were displaced or missing. Pillaging, looting, abductions, torture, rape, and other human rights abuses had occurred on a massive scale throughout the conflict period. Most Liberians had lived in constant fear of the military and police forces, not to mention the numerous warring factions. Liberia's infrastructure had been totally destroyed, with no

functioning electrical grids, no public running water, no sewage, and no other public utilities. Throughout the capital of Monrovia, hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) lived in slums consisting of tin shacks and garbage. After 14 years of violence, chaos, and fear, a pause for peace came about when President Taylor accepted an offer of asylum from Nigeria.

Seeing a “golden hour” for peacebuilding upon the exile of President Taylor, the United Nations, the United States, and certain key leaders/practitioners (including the authors of “[Wider Lessons for Peacebuilding: Security Sector Reform in Liberia](#)” (Stanley Foundation policy analysis brief) immediately focused their engagement on SSR.

An initial priority was to consolidate the state's monopoly of force to uphold the rule of law. Probably the most critical action taken in this regard was the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (DDRR) program, which was implemented by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in a quick, if not hasty, manner on 7 December 2003. Launching the DDRR program quickly, and involving many of the ex-combatants in transitional labor, kept these ex-combatants focused on material gains and employment – rather than on renewing violence. Simple monetary compensation for the arms/ammunition surrendered was a key factor for gaining their cooperation. Another motive for these combatants to show up at a DDRR site was temporary amnesty. Blanket or general amnesty was never issued in Liberia; however, temporary amnesty proved to be vital to the success of the DDRR program. A conscious decision was made – in the interest of disarming and demobilizing armed groups – to postpone the implementation of transitional justice in favor of temporary amnesty, and this approach paid large dividends.

The DDRR program succeeded in disarming and demobilizing 101,449 combatants, and it collected 61,918 weapons and 6,486,136 units of ammunition. Throughout execution of the DDRR program, UNMIL disposed of the collected ordinance, and it worked to seal off Liberia's borders from outside interference. An early threat to the DDRR program surfaced during a 10-day period in December 2003. Significant riots broke out at one of the DDRR sites (Camp Schefflin), posing a major threat to the UNMIL contingent there. Consequently, UNMIL put a halt to the DDRR program. However, within four months, once additional UN peacekeepers were on the ground, UNMIL re-energized the program and resumed execution in full force. That persistence gave a reassuring message to the Liberian government, and to all Liberians, that disarmament, demobilization, and peacebuilding were moving forward and that momentum would be maintained. The pace of disarmament and demobilization picked up quickly.

Similarly, persistence in “maintaining momentum” kept the crucial 2005 Liberian presidential elections on schedule. In opposition, many senior statesmen, interim government officials, and potential candidates had pushed hard for holding party

conventions and for rewriting the constitution in advance of any elections. However, their motives may have been self-serving – to prolong their time in office/exposure, or even to have an opportunity to divert resources (funds from the February 2004 donor conference) for their personal gains rather than for the good of Liberia. Fortunately, the UN, U.S., and certain key leaders in Liberia stood firm on keeping the November 2005 elections on schedule. This resulted in the first female head of state for Africa (Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson), but more importantly resulted in a new, legitimate government – recognized by the vast majority of all Liberians – to establish and uphold the rule of law.

To consolidate a “monopoly of force” for this new government to uphold the rule of law, the UN, U.S., and key leaders/practitioners took the approach of integrating DDR and SSR in the transformation of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). The UN worked the “Disarmament” piece – as it systematically disarmed the legacy national military force. The U.S. simultaneously worked the “Demobilization and Reintegration” pieces, while at the same time restructuring and reforming the force. The entire DDR/SSR program included recruiting, vetting, training, equipping, fielding, sustaining, and mentoring the new force. The program also involved constructing new military bases across the country, establishing a professional defense ministry, drafting a national defense strategy, and redesigning the force structure. The point of intersection between DDR and SSR was “reintegration” – the process of reincorporating as many appropriate ex-combatants into the new military as possible. For the select few who were able to pass the vetting process, “reintegration” not only gave them employment in the new military, but also served to build trust (between former enemies) and let them become an integral part of the greater Liberian peacebuilding effort. Due to the downsizing of the new military, however, other avenues for reintegration for most ex-combatants (economic avenues, such as public works programs) had to be pursued.

Likewise, the UN and U.S. integrated DDR and SSR in the transformation of the Liberian National Police (LNP). The highly corrupt, brutal police force that had operated during the Taylor years was, unfortunately, still largely intact after the civil war. Its officers posed a significant threat to the state and to peace. In response to this threat, the U.S. initially put much a much higher priority and much greater attention on reforming the LNP than on reforming the AFL. The U.S. and UNMIL demobilized (purged) all unqualified policemen, vetted/reintegrated a small number of personnel, conducted extensive recruiting/vetting/training of new police forces, established a new police academy, and developed an emergency infrastructure. UNMIL took on the major role of training the LNP, worked with various international partners to build new police stations and barracks, and equipped the force with vehicles and logistics. Also, efforts were made to increase female representation in the force.

A unique approach taken by recovery leaders and new governmental leaders was the effort to operationalize “human security.” The primary focus here was to

ensure that the population could gain “freedom from fear” of the military. Toward this end, numerous steps were taken to ensure the new AFL would not appear threatening to the people. First, a vetting process was used to screen all of the candidates for the AFL. Second, the AFL's force structure was addressed: its size was made deliberately small, it contained no special units (to preclude any loyalties to a specific person, vice the state), and it was ethnically balanced – with all tribes equally represented. Third, non-traditional training was highly emphasized, covering the following subjects: discipline, moral judgment, respect for the laws of war, Liberian history, the Liberian constitution, civics, and literacy. Additionally, Liberians were taught to be the trainers of the AFL, so that they could take stock in professionalizing their own military.

Finally, besides the many SSR and DDR actions to consolidate the state's monopoly of force, another key short-term action was to mobilize “networks for peace” – for the purpose of counterbalancing networks for war. Conflict-recovery leaders were extremely proactive in promoting the actions of peace-minded groups and in establishing multilateral, national, and nongovernmental webs of people and organizations who wanted a warless Liberia. As nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) trickled back into the country, and as evacuated embassy staff personnel returned, these groups/people were significantly helped by the UN, by the embassies, and by recovery leaders to enhance reintegration and reestablishment of social/support networks. Finally, Liberian women's peace groups were considerably assisted in networking aspects, and they grew to be active informal groups for promoting local, community-based security systems.

Recommendations

In the immediate aftermath of civil war, when a “golden hour” or “window of opportunity” is presented to lay a foundation for peacebuilding and to impact and include the (former) warring factions, leaders/practitioners should immediately address the following areas of the security sector:

1. Consolidate the state's monopoly of force to uphold the rule of law.
2. Maintain momentum of reform and peace.
3. Integrate DDR and SSR in the transformation of military and police forces.
4. Operationalize “human security.”
5. Mobilize “networks for peace” to counterbalance the networks for war.

Implications.

If a post-conflict state does not gain a monopoly of force through prompt reform of its security sector, then it will lack the means to uphold the rule of law and may

face renewed competition from insurgents, militias, organized crime, and revolutionary movements – who can challenge the state's legitimacy, threaten citizens/communities, and potentially push the state back into wide-scale conflict.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the article "[Wider Lessons for Peacebuilding: Security Sector Reform in Liberia](#)," by John Blaney, Jacques Paul Klein, and Sean McFate, a policy analysis brief from the Stanley Foundation, June 2010.

Comments.

A related document, which discusses security sector reform in Liberia and the importance of incorporating non-state security actors and community-based approaches, is "[Security Sector Reform: A Case Study Approach to Transition and Capacity Building](#)," by Sarah Meharg and Aleisha Arnusch, Strategic Studies Institute, January 2010.

Lesson Author: David Mosinski (U.S.).

e. Gender-Sensitive DDR Processes: Integrating Female Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone

Observation.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) processes have narrowly defined women's roles in armed conflict by focusing on women primarily as victims, showing reluctance to identify them as soldiers. Because of this lack of gender sensitization in programming, female ex-combatants, such as those from Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war (1991-2002), have largely avoided participating in DDR processes.

Discussion.

The DDR process for ex-combatants in Sierra Leone has been harkened internationally as a model for success. It was implemented by the UN peacekeeping mission United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and its partners following the signing of the Lome Peace Accord in 1999. "Under the programme, UNAMSIL disarmed combatants from the main warring factions, the RUF and the Civil Defence Forces, a government militia, as well as elements of the former Sierra Leone Army and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council" (UNAMSIL, p. 1). By the completion of the DDR process in February 2004, over 75,000 adult soldiers and more than 6,800 child soldiers had participated in the process. "Demobilized combatants got small cash stipends while undergoing six-month training after which they were then sent back into civilian life with start-up tool kits

to help them find work” (UNAMSIL, p. 1). Almost 55,000 ex-combatants received reintegration benefits such as skills training programs, formal education, and/or tool kits, and over 42,000 weapons were collected and destroyed.

While Sierra Leone’s DDR process was recognized internationally as a success, the vast majority of both adult and child beneficiaries were male. The percentages of women/girls who participated in the DDR process were very low compared with the number who actually participated in the war – only 5,000 out of the 75,000 adults in DDR were women, and only 8% of the participating child soldiers were girls. While the exact number of females involved in the fighting in Sierra Leone remains unknown, estimates range from 10-50% of the armed factions. Some female ex-combatants in Sierra Leone joined armed factions voluntarily and many achieved high military ranks, leading lethal attacks, fighting, and killing, in addition to often acting as sex slaves. Some also had children from the rebels. According to interviews with over fifty former female soldiers in the post-war context, over 75% of those interviewed described their roles as ‘active combat duty.’ “From these interviews it becomes clear that women and girls participated in all facets of war including active combat, commanding, and military training,” in addition to various supporting roles (MacKenzie, p. 249).

Despite this lived reality, few if any programs were directed towards female ex-combatants as soldiers. The DDR program in Sierra Leone used several labels to refer to ‘girls and women associated with the fighting forces,’ including ‘camp followers,’ ‘sex slaves,’ ‘bush wives,’ and ‘abductees.’ In this way, even if these women had actually taken an active part in the violence or fighting, girls/women in this context on the whole were classified as victims. Many of these women were in fact victims on one level. Sexual violence was rampant, used systematically as a currency during the war and experienced by an estimated 70-90% of the women. However, focusing on only one aspect of their experience isolated many female ex-combatants from their lived reality of also participating in the violence. Furthermore, women in supporting roles were not considered to be ‘real soldiers,’ even though male ex-combatants in similar supporting capacity were treated as soldiers by the DDR programs. In this way, the DDR program was based on gendered stereotypes of how men and women experience war, which “led to a disarmament process that did not address the ‘actual lived experiences’ of girls and women” (MacKenzie, p. 246).

There were several barriers that limited female participation in DDR due to how the process was structured. One such barrier to the participation of female ex-combatants in the Sierra Leone DDR process was the weapons policy. Initially, each combatant was required to turn in a gun during the “Disarmament” phase in order to be eligible for the DDR program. However, “both males and females who performed support roles during the conflict (including domestic tasks, acting as spies or messengers, and looters) may or may not have ever possessed a gun” (MacKenzie, p. 251). Many female ex-combatants did not have a gun or no longer had a gun, or had used an alternative type of weapon, such as a machete.

A NOREF report maintains that “[...] women often shared guns when engaged in fighting. The fact that sometimes four or five women shared one gun became a challenge during the DDR process, when the handover of an individual gun was required for an individual to be considered eligible to participate in DDR programmes” (p. 2). Over 11 years of war, items were lost, stolen, and/or transferred; furthermore, some commanders deliberately took weapons from women/girls to preclude their eligibility in DDR.

Another obstacle preventing female ex-combatants from participating in the DDR process was the way in which the children’s and adults’ DDR processes were separated. The distinction and eligibility for each respective program was based on international definitions of the age limits for children and youth. However, these international standards did not make sense in the local context. Local traditions differentiated children from adults based on the completion of certain traditional ceremonies, not on age. As such, even if a young girl had been with the rebel forces and had already born a child of her own, she would not be considered an adult in the local community if she had not completed the milestone rituals. If she was young enough, she could still qualify for the children’s DDR process – however, she might not consider herself to be a child because of having had her own child. In this situation, attending a DDR process might be shameful for her or her family. This distinction between adult’s and children’s DDR caused many such female ex-combatants to avoid the process altogether.

The “Reintegration” stage of the DDR process also posed challenges for female ex-combatants. “Women were given few choices in their reintegration process: silence or stigma, limited training or nothing, isolation or marriage, motherhood, and returning to their families” (MacKenzie, p. 258). Traditionally, reintegration for women has been treated as a sensitization process to their marriageability if they had been raped or had children out of wedlock. This is an important consideration, especially given the high degree of sexual violence many women experienced and their subsequent unique needs. However, these are not the only factors to consider. It was assumed that reintegration for women would be a ‘social’ process that would happen ‘naturally.’ Yet, in situations of conflict, norms are often disrupted and the social order is rearranged. Some women were empowered by the conflict and by the new roles they could fulfill because of it. So, returning back to norms of the past meant that they would lose power and status, especially since such women are often sidelined out of post-conflict policies. Furthermore, the training options available for women in Sierra Leone’s DDR reintegration phase were trades such as tailoring, soap-making, and weaving. These were very gendered options, not particularly lucrative, and seemed condescending to women who had participated and led military units in rebel movements for eleven years.

As such, few female ex-combatants participated or desired to participate in Sierra Leone’s DDR process. The vast majority of those interviewed did not think that it would be useful to them and lacked access to accurate information about the

program. (44 of the 50 women interviewed, for example, had escaped from armed groups but were not aware that they would still qualify for the DDR process as escapees.) Others had negative perceptions of the process, seeing it as corrupt and fearing that it was a trap to identify anti-government combatants since photo ID cards were a prerequisite for DDR start-up packages. Many were concerned that identifying themselves would lead to potential retaliation. Female ex-combatants faced different kinds of stigma than did returning males; men might even be seen as heroes for having participated in the fighting. Women, however, were largely not seen in a positive way for having participated in the war. Many female ex-combatants and escapees subsequently avoided DDR because they were trying to disassociate themselves from the armed factions.

For both male and female ex-combatants to fully participate in and benefit from DDR processes, the programs cannot be designed as a gender-neutral process. “The case of Sierra Leone demonstrates that the failure to address gender as a factor in post-conflict programming as not only sacrificing gender equality, but also the overall effectiveness of the DDR process and the chances for a true and lasting transition from conflict to peace” (MacKenzie, p. 243).

Recommendations

1. Consult with female ex-combatants in the program design for DDR to understand both the ways in which they have been victimized by the conflict and “the ways in which they have participated in the conflict as agents, as supporters, and as soldiers” (MacKenzie, p. 261). All too often, “[p]rograms for female victims of the war, abducted girls and women, and girls left behind were developed in the absence of women’s own accounts of what roles they took up during the war, how they perceived the DDR, and why they did not participate in the DDR” (MacKenzie, p. 255).

2. Utilize GENDER MAINSTREAMING to form gender-sensitive DDR models so that gender is considered and included ahead of time, not as an afterthought. This includes identifying women as ex-combatants, establishing appropriate criteria for them to participate in DDR, understanding the obstacles to women’s political participation ‘post-conflict,’ and being sensitive to their experiences of stigmatization and discrimination.

- Take local traditions into account (e.g., child – adult ceremonies) so that DDR is not just an internationally-imposed process.
- Incorporate sensitivity to rampant sexual violence but do not use it to define women’s experiences too narrowly.
- Emphasize the need for reintegration of female ex-combatants without assuming that it will be a natural social process. Offer livelihood options that would be relevant to their experience, not based solely on gender stereotypes. Do not pressure women to resume traditional gender roles, especially if these roles have been broken by over a decade of war.

3. Provide clear information about the DDR process, educating the public on eligibility and on the use of ex-combatant personal information (for photo ID cards, etc.). Target specific audiences for awareness-raising, such as female ex-combatant soldiers and escapees. Utilize language that fits with the lived experience of these women.

Implications.

If gender mainstreaming is utilized in the design of DDR processes, then DDR may be more relevant for female ex-combatants; if it is more relevant to female ex-combatants, they may participate more in the process; if they participate in a process that is tailored to meet their unique needs, then they may have access to increased opportunities to relevant livelihoods and community participation. If female ex-combatants are educated about the DDR process and how their personal information would be used, it may decrease their anxiety about participating in DDR.

If the DDR process is not sensitized to sexual violence, then female ex-combatants' needs may go unaddressed. However, if DDR programs solely focus on sexual violence for women, female ex-combatants will only be seen as victims, even though some may have also participated in the violence. If they are only seen as victims and not also as agents in the conflict, their roles in the conflict may be "depoliticized," which may take them out of the 'post-conflict' policy discourse. "By encouraging women and girl soldiers to return to their "normal places" in the community, any new roles or positions of authority they may have held during the conflict are stripped from them, and [...] then the DDR process risks entrenching gender inequality" (MacKenzie, p. 258, 261). However, if women are taken seriously (by DDR programs) for the various roles they held during the conflict, then they may be able to sustain the social change of gender norms and experience empowerment 'post-conflict.'

Event Description.

This lesson was based on information found in the following sources:

- "[Women in armed groups and fighting forces: lessons learned from gender-sensitive DDR programmes](#)," by: Elisa Tarnaala, NOREF (Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre) report, June 2016.
- "[Securitization and Desecuritization: Female Soldiers and the Reconstruction of Women in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone](#)," by: Megan MacKenzie, Security Studies 18:241-261, Routledge, 2009.
- "[Fact Sheet 1: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration](#)," United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone," UNAMSIL / MINUSIL, December 2005.

See also the video presentations from USIP's event (16 February 2011), "[Female Soldiers and DDR: Sierra Leone, Nepal, and Colombia](#)."

Comments.

“The overwhelming message [from] my interviewees was that there is no “post” conflict for many female soldiers in Sierra Leone. For a large number of the women interviewed, different forms of violence such as forced marriage, sexual exploitation, and isolation continue despite the cessation of formal conflict” (MacKenzie, p. 258).

“In many cases women and girls join armed groups as a way of escaping oppression and obtaining gender equality and a form of freedom. Returning to settings in which they no longer have the same equalities that they have struggled for can create tensions and lead to conflict” (NOREF, p. 4).

“Women who entered armed groups and thus joined a militarised social-relational world as children or young adults – which is the experience of many females in armed conflict contexts – experience their entire socialisation in terms of the norms and values of that context. During demobilisation and reintegration they confront a world where the military constructs they have become accustomed to may no longer apply or be relevant. While their experience in an armed group may have been either empowering or oppressive or enslaving, it has transformed their identities and expectations in ways that conflict with the realities of the “outside world” and create challenges when that world is entered. Effective rehabilitation programming must acknowledge these redefined gender identities, because they have the potential to empower both ex-combatants and other women in their communities” (NOREF, p. 3).

Lesson Author: Katrina Gehman (U.S.).

f. Sustainable Reintegration – Benefits from Local Investment (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Observation.

Within the challenging problem-set of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR), focused attention and investment in local communities can greatly enhance the reintegration component, as shown by the work of [Centre Resolution Conflicts \(CRC\)](#) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Success was gained through attention/investment in four areas: (1) the ex-combatants’ attitudes and employability, (2) public/community information, (3) family financial resources/micro-loans, and (4) reconciliation systems.

Discussion.

During the 2011-2014 timeframe, CRC implemented a reintegration project covering 38 communities in the eastern DRC – a project that aimed to provide

economic and social support for ex-combatants, their wives, and other returning displaced persons. The project took a holistic approach that envisioned “sustainable reintegration” as the key to long-term DDR success. This approach included investments in ex-combatant support (education, training, etc.), family financial support, public information, and reconciliation. It is important to note that CRC concentrated its efforts at the grassroots/local/community level.

1. Ex-combatant Support. CRC endeavored to help ex-combatants with both their self-esteem and employability. CRC provided skills training, psychological support, lessons on peaceful living, and even shared sets of farming equipment for those pursuing agricultural work. CRC helped hundreds of ex-combatants join local co-operatives, where they could work alongside community members in farming, trading, and other jobs. CRC also helped ex-combatants gain employment in public infrastructure and roadway repair work.

2. Micro-Loans. CRC implemented a micro-loan program specifically for the wives of ex-combatants. The micro-loans helped these women earn a living from activities ranging from hairdressing to animal husbandry. Micro-loans also allowed many women to launch small businesses – with a number of women’s associations also assisting and providing business training and equipment.

3. Public/Community Information. CRC established 42 radio clubs in which ex-combatants (in a club setting) could gather to listen to CRC’s broadcasts from local radio stations. These broadcasts conveyed information not only to the radio clubs – but also to the public at large – about conflict resolution, security, health, education, and household matters. The broadcasts encouraged discussion among club members and community members – facilitating ex-combatant reintegration, belonging, and a sense of unity.

4. Reconciliation. CRC established a network of 31 reconciliation commissions – which helped people overcome grievances and find alternatives to violence. Each commission was composed of about 20 members who identified, monitored, and diffused potential conflicts; helped settle on-going disputes; raised awareness of rights and civic duties; and, liaised with local authorities on behalf of victims of injustice. CRC also provided training and advice to the commissions on key issues such as land rights.

Overall, CRC achieved considerable success – not only in the reintegration of ex-combatants, but also in advancing safety and security in most communities. Results included: 400 ex-combatants employed in co-operatives, expansion of radio clubs from 42 to 300, new businesses launched, 80% of all micro-loans repaid, improved well-being for participants/ex-combatants/wives, fewer incidents of crime and violence within communities, improved freedom of movement, greater economic activity for many communities, and positive attitudes and relationships among ex-combatants and community residents. Although safety and security improved for most communities, one particular region was still

experiencing security issues from earlier/on-going conflict. Also, although considerable success was attained overall, CRC reported a number of challenges that somewhat hindered outcomes, such as shortfalls in information technology, budgeting, staffing, and quantities of farming equipment.

Recommendations

1. For DDR programs, establish the goal of “sustainable reintegration” – whereby ex-combatants can live in, work in, and be accepted by communities long-term.
2. Recognize the importance of “community investment” when planning the reintegration component of DDR. Building and sustaining relationships at the grassroots level is the key enabler for reintegration.
3. Use a holistic approach that includes ex-combatant support (education, training, etc.), public/community information campaigns, financial resources/loans, reconciliation systems, and other efforts as appropriate for the given situation and communities involved.
4. Endeavor to ensure that reintegration requirements are properly assessed and resourced – budgeting, staffing, communications, training material, starter kits, tools, etc.

Implications.

If certain key areas/factors of reintegration are not given proper attention – i.e., ex-combatant support (education, training, etc.), family financial resources/loans, public information, and reconciliation systems – then reintegration is likely to fail over the long term, undermining the overall DDR program/investments, and perhaps leading to relapses of disputes, opposition groups, and conflicts..

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the paper “[Locally Led Stabilization and Peacebuilding in Congo](#),” by Peace Direct, 3 September 2015.

Lesson Author: David Mosinski (U.S.).

g. Bottom-Up Approach to Reintegration in Northern Afghanistan

Observation.

The Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) saw significant success in northern Afghanistan (mid-2010 to mid-2011) because lower level

authorities across the northern provinces were encouraged and resourced to execute this program – although not through the actions of the Afghan national government. Success of the APRP in northern Afghanistan can be attributed to the proactive strategy and steering of Regional Command-North (RC-North). The APRP did not attain broader, Afghan-wide success primarily because the Afghan national government did not empower provincial governments to execute the program and did not engage local/district leaders to support the program. In addition, other Regional Commands were not as proactive as RC-North.

Discussion.

When the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) established the APRP during the summer of 2010, RC-North quickly embraced the program – launching a proactive strategy to support all three stages of the program. The results were tremendous. Within one year's time, 1,840 of the estimated 4,500-6,000 insurgents in the northern provinces had opted for reintegration, and an additional 163 insurgents were in negotiations for reintegration. By comparison, the other five regions of Afghanistan experienced a combined total of just over 2,000 reintegrated personnel over the same period.

Across the northern provinces, RC-North aggressively contributed to Afghan execution of all three phases/pillars of the APRP: (1) Outreach and Grievance Resolution, (2) Demilitarization, and (3) Consolidation of Peace. For the first phase/pillar – Outreach and Grievance Resolution – RC-North actively supported both formal and informal outreach. It actively helped provincial governors promote broad awareness of the APRP by collaborating on development of television spots, radio announcements, and news reports about the peace process and reintegration events. These were broadcast across the provinces and repeatedly disseminated in target areas with known insurgent populations. RC-North assisted the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and provincial governors in the production and distribution of reintegration flyers. Customized leaflets were produced with a governor's message and a GIROA or ANSF "hot-line" number that could be called to gain more information about reintegration. Additionally, RC-North worked with Afghan officials to set up APRP billboards with messages of peace and reintegration at various locations.

For the second phase/pillar – Demobilization – RC-North helped provincial governors in designing and resourcing their own demobilization training classes. RC-North produced a month-long, generic program of demobilization training which the provinces could tailor for local conditions and requirements. Governors quickly took ownership of the demobilization training and lined up ANSF members, local religious scholars, and local GIROA employees to serve as instructors. When the Afghan national government was not yet ready to pay the APRP-designated stipend so that reintegrating personnel could purchase food and other necessities for themselves and their families, RC-North followed the stipend model outlined in the APRP and provided stipend funds to provincial

governors, who then delivered the stipends to reintegrating personnel. RC-North also assisted provincial governors in establishing Afghan Reintegration Centers – to accommodate administrative work, meetings, reintegration shuras, demobilization training, certain vocational training, short-term living accommodations, and actions for women.

For the third phase/pillar – Consolidation of Peace – RC-North engaged with provincial governors to help them find ways to offer skills training and community-based development project work/employment. However, RC-North was insistent in telling governors that they must make clear to reintegrating personnel that APRP does not promise jobs. RC-North also utilized the Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) and the Department of Defense (DoD) Afghan Reintegration Program (ARP) to provide start-up capital / program funding for the first six months of vocational skills training for reintegrating personnel. Provincial governors agreed to contribute “in kind”; they provided training centers and budgets to pay for meals for personnel in training.

Throughout the execution of its APRP support strategy, the primary factors that drove RC-North to success were:

- **Command Emphasis.** RC-North's German Commander and American Deputy Commander made a strong commitment to reintegration. They emphasized reintegration during nearly every security briefing, key leader engagement, and staff meeting. The deputy commander required nightly desk-side reintegration briefs, and the commander required weekly ones.
- **Building Trust with Lower-level Leaders.** RC-North established strong relationships of trust with most provincial governors, many district and municipal leaders, and numerous community leaders as well. Members of RC-North met with provincial leaders at least weekly – to plan, update, and discuss APRP issues. RC-North personnel coached, mentored, and steered Afghan officials on APRP issues, but always insisted on Afghan solutions.
- **Dealing from a Position of Strength.** RC-North made it clear to Afghan leaders that both parties must maintain goodwill and deliver on agreements. If certain Afghan leaders continually broke promises/agreements, RC-North refocused support to other leaders who had honored their deals. RC-North was always careful not to commit to anything it could not deliver – continuously demonstrating credibility and strength by meeting pledges.
- **Permissive Conditions.** Security conditions across the northern provinces were generally conducive to RC-North's proactive strategy/ actions in support of the APRP. Other RCs saw less favorable conditions on the whole, i.e., greater insurgent activity. Nonetheless, RC-North still employed a proactive, aggressive approach wherever pockets of insurgency existed were seen, and this approach paid off. RC-North

employed lethal operations to target insurgent leaders in those areas/ pockets on a persistent basis, and such operations proved effective at undermining insurgent strength and confidence. Leaflets and radio messages following raids exploited insurgents' concerns and offered them an attractive alternative over remaining with the insurgency. Interviews with reintegration candidates revealed that such pressure worked against them and their leaders.

- “Afwā” (Forgiveness) and Amnesty. Forgiveness and amnesty from past deeds were the primary incentives for reintegrating personnel. During informal outreach/contact, most insurgents would not agree to come forward to a reintegration shura without first determining/ knowing whether they would be granted amnesty. Amnesty was not given lightly. Former insurgents would need to offer public admission of wrongful deeds and ask for forgiveness, and elders and religious leaders would make public admonishments and cast shame on insurgents' actions. Only then were forgiveness and amnesty formally granted.

Problem areas experienced by RC-North as well as by the other regional commands were the following:

- Over-centralized Decision-making (by the Afghan National Government). RC-North's experience was that the Afghan national government impeded execution of its own program (the APRP). The Afghan national government withheld funds from the Reintegration Financing Mechanism (RFM) (more than \$200 million pledged by donor nations for reintegration), causing major delays in APRP stipends and support. Also, decisions on reintegration made by provincial and district representatives on reintegration were frequently reversed by the Afghan national government, often with no explanation, after long periods of silence.
- Insufficient Involvement of Communities and Districts. Although the APRP outlined a bottom-up approach that would connect reintegrating communities to district leaders above them, the Afghan national government was not providing resources or authorities to these lower levels. Furthermore, the Afghan national government began reshaping policies to minimize the provincial role – rendering it to an administrative capacity in the APRP.

Overall, RC-North was still able to facilitate a successful bottom-up approach across the northern provinces – in spite of certain hindrances from the Afghan national government. RC-North demonstrated that a proactive reintegration support strategy – with command emphasis, commitment of resources for reintegration activities, and building trust with lower level leaders – can help to launch and sustain an effective reintegration program. In one year's time, nearly 2,000 insurgents opted for reintegration.

Recommendations

1. A host nation government and its partners (international security assistance forces) should strongly consider placing emphasis on a bottom-up approach to reintegration in environments such as Afghanistan where ethnic groups, tribes, clans, and other social groups retain strength in governing their local areas. The bottom-up approach should empower lower level authorities (provinces and districts) to execute reintegration programs and should encourage the involvement of social/community group leaders.
2. When a bottom-up approach to reintegration is employed, international security assistance forces should take extraordinary actions to build trust with lower level leaders (e.g., provincial, district, municipal, and community/social group leaders), commit resources to help launch and sustain momentum of lower level reintegration programs, and shape the will of the people to accept, support, and take ownership of these programs.

Implications.

If reintegration programs are over-centralized and lower-level leaders are marginalized in program execution – particularly in an environment where ethnic groups, tribes, clans, and other social groups retain strength in governing their areas – then many insurgents/fighters will elect not to participate at all in the program due to a lack of trust in the executing authorities.

Event Description.

This lesson is based on the article "Through and With: Reintegration in Northern Afghanistan," by Colonel Christian M. Karsner and Doctor Sarah E. Kocczynski, [Special Warfare magazine](#), January - March 2012.

Comments.

A related report which examined the progress of the APRP – concluding that this program has been ineffective nationwide due to failures to obtain local buy-in, an absence of vigorous support from the Afghan national government, and the lack of a constitutional and legal framework for greater provincial autonomy – is "[Talking about Talks: Toward a Political Settlement in Afghanistan](#)," International Crisis Group. 26 March 2012. In the full report, see paragraph IV.B. "Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program."

Lesson Author: David Mosinski (U.S.).

3. Conclusion:

a. Takeaways. Takeaways from the above lessons are:

(1) **Takeaway 1:** Utilize a **strategic framework** for DDR if/when conducting a DDR intervention in a post-conflict environment. [Examples: [Current UN IDDRS Framework](#), [2006 DOS S/CRS DDR Guide](#), etc.]. Address the following elements within the “strategic framework”:

- establishment of a national-level DDR program
- assurance of national-level commitment
- designation of an overarching executive authority to run the program
- space for regional/provincial execution (and synchronization of their approaches/activities with the national-level program)
- provision for granting amnesty (e.g., temporary amnesty, conditional amnesty, etc.)
- development of nationally-driven employment programs
- the use of information operations to inform and influence former fighters/ combatants

(2) **Takeaway 2:** If/when the U.S. is involved in the DDR intervention, designate **ministerial advisors** from the Departments of State, Defense, and Justice to work with the HN/executive authority to help keep the DDR program on track.

b. Insights. In addition to the preceding takeaways, this report also offers the following insights on DDR, drawn from documents in SOLLIMS repositories:

(1) **Insight 1:** DDR’s success depends on an **integration of strategies and planning** across a wide range of sectoral areas. For example, if economic development does not progress sufficiently to provide long-term economic opportunities for communities in general, disarmed and demobilized ex-combatants may face unemployment once the immediate benefits of a DDR program expire. The probability of returning to violence (as a way to earn money) increases in this scenario. DDR programs only succeed coordinated with reform efforts in other key sectors including the security sector (reform of the military and police), rule of law, governance, and the economy.

Reference: [Lessons-Learned: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration \(DDR\) in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations – A Guide for United States Government Planners](#), U.S. Department of State, S/CRS, April 2006, page 5.

(2) **Insight 2: Gender-sensitive DDR programming** must be linked into the entire peace process, from the peace negotiations through peacekeeping and subsequent peacebuilding activities. This process should include issues such as identifying women and setting the appropriate criteria for their entering DDR processes; understanding identity issues and obstacles facing women’s post-

conflict political participation; targeting women as larger units with their children and partners rather than merely as individuals; addressing female health and psychosocial needs; and, sensitization to the particular issues around the gender dimensions of violence and community acceptance.

Reference: [Women in Armed Groups and Fighting Forces: Lessons Learned from Gender-Sensitive DDR Programmes](#), by Elisa Tarnaala, NOREF, June 2016, page 1.

(3) Insight 3: A comparative analysis reveals several common patterns in the kinds of provisional and operational choices associated with efficient Disarmament and Demobilization (DD) implementation. Having a definite timeline and largely completing the process prior to the first elections creates an incentivized environment for a timely DD process while diminishing the risks of election-related violence. Economic incentives associated with the process of cantonment can increase the duration of DD programs. External actors with a strong mandate can solve problems faster and have been instrumental in achieving a swift DD progression. Disarmament programs must be **realistically matched to conflict settings**. This can include the use of mobile collection units, which have proven to be successful in cases where a primary centralized site is not sufficient.

Reference: [Disarmament and Demobilization in Comparative Perspective: Patterns and Policy Recommendations](#), by Madhav Joshi and J. Michael Quinn, NOREF, November 2012, page 1.

(4) Insight 4: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) has to be an integral part of DDR planning and implementation. Well-planned monitoring and focused evaluation make a DDR program more effective and help to distinguish what works and what does not. ...During the planning phase of a DDR program, planners need to define a clear result chain, decide what needs to be monitored and evaluated, choose a meaningful set of indicators and define the capacities and budget required for M&E. During implementation, DDR program staff need to monitor progress towards results, monitor external risks, manage external evaluations and report the relevant information to the right stakeholders.

Reference: [How to Guide: Monitoring and Evaluation for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programmes](#), UNDP, 2009, page 69.

(5) Insight 5: Link DDR and SSR in program design. Linking DDR and SSR concerns in program design helps avoid duplication and ensure that activities reflect common objectives. The consequences of incoherence are well illustrated by the Afghanistan case. ...Programs should be designed on the basis of a close understanding of how DDR and SSR will affect local security dynamics.

Reference: [Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform: Insights from UN Experience in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central Africa Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), edited by Alan Bryden and Vincenza Scherrer, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF), 16 March 2012, pages 189-190.

(6) **Insight 6:** Failing to take into account interests and dividing lines between different stakeholders can contribute to programs that are insensitive to root causes of conflict and insecurity. **Peace agreements** should therefore be considered as an important entry point to establish basic principles for DDR and SSR. But this opportunity can only be exploited if participation is widened to include the range of national actors with a stake in the outcome of negotiations.

Reference: [Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform: Insights from UN Experience in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central Africa Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), edited by Alan Bryden and Vincenza Scherrer, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF), 16 March 2012, page 184.

(7) **Insight 7: DDR “challenges and lessons”** include:

Disarmament

Challenges

- Ongoing armed conflict.
- Lack of political will for disarmament.
- Real numbers of weapons not easily obtained and verified.
- Initial commitment to disarming may be low.
- High number of weapons circulating in community.
- Lack of legal framework governing weapons ownership.
- Proliferation of militias and fluctuating numbers of members, and thus difficulty in defining who is a militia member, which greatly challenges the generation and management of lists and baselines.

Lessons

- Disarmament activities may not resolve insecurity, and may actually become the source of further insecurity.
- Disarmament is not always the most effective component with which to launch a DDR process.
- A DDR framework/strategy is needed to address irregular armed groups.

Demobilization

Challenges

- Often poor understanding of the types of groups and organizations that are being demobilized (militias, clans, ethnic groups), as well as of their needs and agendas.

Lessons

- It is important for these groups (being demobilized) to be provided with a positive and constructive approach.
- DDR authorities/decision-makers need to address whether or not command structures of various groups/organizations should be destroyed, weakened, or left intact.
- Demobilization incentives should be attractive, pertinent, and linked to reintegration strategies.

Reintegration

Challenges

- Reintegration is a much longer process than disarmament and demobilization.
- Lack of national economic recovery. Creating alternative livelihoods and/or jobs is exceptionally difficult in post-conflict or conflict settings.

Lessons

- It is critical that all actors involved in DDR work closely and in tight coordination. Joint planning, coordination, and capacity development, as well as sustained funding, are crucial for reintegration.
- UN agencies should develop long-term reintegration or development opportunities that complement and reinforce the overall DDR process.

Reference: [Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration \(DDR\) Practices in Peace Operations](#), UNDPKO, 2010, page 13.

(8) Insight 8: It is of utmost importance to cater for active participation in community business of returning populations in the aftermath of conflict; this is especially true concerning former combatants. When planning for DDR, and especially for reintegration assistance, considerations should accordingly be made to ensure **inclusive participation in the reintegration process**. Former combatants and other individuals associated with armed groups should actively be part of the process of creating a common vision of future community life. ...By planning and delivering (re)integration assistance with active participation from all population segments in the community to which former combatants return, prospects will increase to get to terms with some of the root causes to the conflict and help to reconcile and bridge between community members.

Reference: [DDR and Community-based Integration – How to Mitigate Stigmatization of Former Combatants](#), by Stefan Åström and Bengt Ljunggren, Folke Bernadotte Academy, 9 May 2016, pages 8-9 and 13.

(9) Insight 9: Disarmament and Demobilization (DD) of ex-combatants is a highly visible process that can increase public confidence in peace and stability efforts.

Key actions in the DD process include:

- Start DD planning early.
- Tailor the DD strategy to local conditions.
- Include details of disarmament and demobilization in the peace agreement.
- Provide credible security guarantees to build confidence in disarmament.
- Maximize host nation ownership in the disarmament and demobilization strategy.
- Inform the population to build popular support.
- Aim for inclusivity of all warring parties.

- Include affected nontraditional combatants.
- Ensure accountability to human rights standards through identification.
- Ensure that DD is civilian-led, with technical input and operational support from international forces.

Reference: [Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction](#), USIP and PKSOI, 2009, pages 56-58.

(10) Insight 10: The reintegration of former combatants is the most politically sensitive element of the conventional DDR program and thus presents a more complex challenge than either disarmament or demobilization. While DD processes are time-bound and quantifiable, reintegration is much less discrete, making it harder to implement, monitor, and measure for success. **Successful reintegration requires understanding and addressing the social and economic needs of the combatants** – as wielding weapons may have become a major part of their identity or livelihood. Reintegration also requires careful treatment of psychosocial impacts for child soldiers, women, and girls who were abused during violent conflict. Another challenge involves preparing and convincing host communities to accept ex-combatants into their neighborhoods.

Reference: [Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction](#), USIP and PKSOI, 2009, page 59.

(11) Insight 11: Instead of developing a one-size-fits-all DDR program for children, DDR developers and implementation staff should seek to implement **programs for children with options tailored to needs and experiences** – i.e., programs in which former child soldiers can pick and choose the components that are necessary on an individual basis. This system may encourage accountability and result in less frustration, and it will also be less likely to conflict with local norms and values.

Reference: [The Study of Child Soldiers: Issues and Consequences for DDR Implementation](#), by Roos Haer, Third World Quarterly, 2017, pages 460-461.

(12) Insight 12: The database commonly used in UN DDR programs is DREAM, a generic DDR software for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) control. This database supports the initial registration of combatants, transitional payments and benefits, SALW management and distribution, and the support to reintegration through training and work projects for each registered participant. In interviews with different DDR experts, DREAM was frequently criticized for not being flexible enough to adapt to the specific context on the ground. ...Given the fragmented nature of DDR programs, it is necessary to **enhance the interoperability of DDR databases** for different users and to incorporate options to change and add context-specific variables, where required.

Reference: [Assessing the Impact of DDR Programmes: Possibilities and Challenges](#), by Franziska Seethaler, United Nations University, 2016, pages 9-11.

(13) **Insight 13:** The **key ingredients** for a successful DDR program are:

- political will, including commitment and pragmatism, throughout the process
- careful preparation, including participatory methods to profile ex-combatants and assess the economic and social potential of areas of return
- transparent and effective institutions, including i) delivering assistance simply, i.e., minimizing transaction costs and corruption and maximizing benefits to ex-combatants, and ii) coordinating at the central level but decentralizing implementation to communities
- timely and adequate financing
- integration with ongoing and future humanitarian and development efforts

Reference: [Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration](#), World Bank, February 2009.

4. DDR References and Resources:

- United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre: <http://unddr.org>
- The Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) and the Operational Guide to the IDDRS: <http://unddr.org/iddrs.aspx>
- [DDR Programme Management Toolkit](#), UNDPKO, 1 June 2012
- [Lessons-Learned: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration \(DDR\) in Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations – A Guide for United States Government Planners](#), U.S. Department of State, S/CRS, April 2006
- [Women in Armed Groups and Fighting Forces: Lessons Learned from Gender-Sensitive DDR Programmes](#), by Elisa Tarnaala, NOREF, June 2016
- [Disarmament and Demobilization in Comparative Perspective: Patterns and Policy Recommendations](#), by Madhav Joshi and J. Michael Quinn, NOREF, November 2012
- [How to Guide: Monitoring and Evaluation for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programmes](#), UNDP, 2009
- [Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform: Insights from UN Experience in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central Africa Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), edited by Alan Bryden and Vincenza Scherrer, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces (DCAF), 16 March 2012

- [Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration \(DDR\) Practices in Peace Operations](#), UNDPKO, 2010
- [DDR and Community-based Integration – How to Mitigate Stigmatization of Former Combatants](#), by Stefan Åström and Bengt Ljunggren, Folke Bernadotte Academy, 9 May 2016
- [Guiding Principles for Stabilization and Reconstruction](#), USIP and PKSOI, 2009
- [The Study of Child Soldiers: Issues and Consequences for DDR Implementation](#), by Roos Haer, Third World Quarterly, 2017
- [Assessing the Impact of DDR Programmes: Possibilities and Challenges](#), by Franziska Seethaler, United Nations University, 2016
- [Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration](#), World Bank, February 2009
- [Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Programs: An Assessment](#), by Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl and Nicholas Samanis, Folke Bernadotte Academy, 2010
- [Demobilization and Disarmament in Peace Processes](#), by Véronique Dudouet, NOREF, November 2012
- [DDR and SSR in War-to-Peace Transition](#), by Christopher von Dyck, DCAF, 21 December 2016
- [Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration \(DDR\): A Practical Overview \[self-paced course\]](#), by Mr. Cornelis Steenken, Peace Operations Training Institute, 2017

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Annex: PKSOI **Lesson Reports** and Publications (2013-2017) (Available in SOLLIMS Resource Library)

2017

- **Lessons on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)**
- Operationalizing Women, Peace, and Security
- Leadership in Crisis and Complex Operations
- Civil Affairs in Stability Operations

2016

- Refugees & Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
- Strategic Communication/Messaging in Peace & Stability Operations
- **Job Creation Programs – Insights from Africa and Conflict-affected States**
- Stabilization and Transition
- **Lessons from the MSF Hospital (Trauma Center) Strike in Kunduz**
- Investing in Training for, and during, Peace and Stability Operations
- Building Stable Governance
- **Lessons Learned – Peacekeeping Operations in Africa**
- Shifts in United Nations Peacekeeping

2015

- Foreign Humanitarian Assistance: Concepts, Principles and Applications
- Foreign Humanitarian Assistance [Foreign Disaster Relief]
- Cross-Cutting Guidelines for Stability Operations
- Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students
- Security Sector Reform

2014

- **MONUSCO Lesson Report**
- Reconstruction and Development
- **Veterinary Support, Animal Health, and Animal Agriculture in Stability Operations**
- Women, Peace and Security
- Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students
- Overcoming “Challenges & Spoilers” with “Unity & Resolve”
- Improving Host Nation Security through Police Forces

2013

- Key Enablers for Peacekeeping & Stability Operations
- Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students
- Strategic Lessons in Peacekeeping & Stability Operations, Vol. 2
- Multinational Operations
- Leadership in Stability Operations: Understanding/Engaging the People
- Protection of Civilians