

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) as a participatory process: involving communities and beneficiaries in post-conflict disarmament programmes

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Abstract

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes are a structured approach to returning soldiers and militia members to civilian life. One of the aims is to support implementation of the peace process, by addressing their interests and reducing the chance of them becoming “spoilers”. Since the early 90s, DDR has been implemented in countries emerging from conflict, such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola and Afghanistan. They are now underway in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. The results have been mixed, and the agencies responsible for designing and implementing DDR are still developing best practice.

This study aims to identify the role of a participatory approach as a factor in ensuring success in a DDR programme. Ex-combatants, receiving communities, local implementing partners, and newly-established national structures can all be involved to a greater or lesser degree in the process. The argument for greater involvement – a participatory approach – includes better outcomes in terms of ownership of the process and political will, improved likelihood that real needs are addressed, greater relevance for female ex-combatants and children, sustainability in reintegration and economic initiatives, and capacity building.

Abbreviations

CAFF:	Children Associated with Fighting Forces
CDD:	Community-Driven Development
DDR:	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DDRR:	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration, and Rehabilitation [Liberia]
ICC:	Interim Care Centres
IDDRS:	Integrated DDR Standards
IGO:	Inter-Governmental Organisation
INGO:	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LNGO:	Local Non-Governmental Organisation
NCDDR:	National Commission on DDR
NCDDRR:	National Commission on DDRR [Liberia]
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
PM&E:	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
SIDDR:	Stockholm Initiative on DDR
SRSR:	Special Representative of the Secretary General

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UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
XC: Ex-combatant
XCAFF: Ex-Children Associated with Fighting Forces

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes are a structured approach to returning combatants and others associated with armed groups to civilian life or to restructured security sector positions in the course of a peace process. The objectives include reducing the number of potential spoilers, helping the political and social recovery of the country, and reducing insecurity, thereby underpinning the peace process. Since the early 90s, UN-lead DDR has been implemented by countries experiencing conflict such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola and Afghanistan. DDR programmes are underway or imminent in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, and Sudan. Analysis is possible on which factors are associated with successful DDR and its role in supporting the peace process. This study intends to look at the possible benefits of taking a participatory approach to DDR, in which all the stakeholders are consulted and involved in planning, implementing and reviewing the process.

The term 'participation' in this study is taken from the development context, as explained by Robert Chambers (1997, 1998), and as promoted by those agencies committed to a partnership approach to development work through nationally-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This requires, among other things, that the beneficiaries and implementers of a development programme are genuinely involved in, consulted on, and make input to, the main stages of its planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The objective is not only that a better and more relevant programme is developed; it also aims to engender a higher level of 'ownership' of it by community, building of capacity among actors in the country, and greater sustainability of the programme's outputs. The importance of these factors in DDR is that reintegration of ex-combatants can be a difficult process for all parties, including the communities which are being asked to accept them, which requires political buy-in at several levels, if it is to be sustainable. A badly conceived or poorly managed process, in which there is inadequate participation can lead to resentment, unfulfilled expectations, and a perception of unfair rewards for militia members. All these factors can in turn affect the outcome negatively.

The hypothesis for this study is that a participatory approach, involving all relevant stakeholders, is a factor in effective implementation of DDR programmes, and whether they lead to successful reintegration of ex-combatants². It is associated with determining whether the issues addressed reflect the genuine needs of ex-combatants, and also of the communities which receive them. The research question therefore asks: is a participatory approach to DDR associated with greater success in implementation of the programme, and with more sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants?

² The term "ex-combatant" is used here for convenience, to cover all of those associated with armed groups, some of whom would have had a non-combatant role in the group such as cook, porter, or bush wife.

How DDR has evolved

The conceptualization and practice of DDR has evolved since the early 1990s, as it increasingly became accepted as a standard programme to be included in comprehensive peace agreements. While there may still be lingering perception that it is a 'cash for guns' deal, DDR has become a sophisticated and multi-faceted operation, often involving a dozen or more agencies.

The accepted definition of DDR within the UN system is:

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.

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.

Reinsertion is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. ...

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 timeframe, 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.

UN Secretary General (2006: 8)

An integrated, holistic approach to DDR

The importance of a holistic approach for DDR was recognised as early as the mid 90s, at the level of planning, funding, and ensuring that there is effective transition from demobilisation to reintegration (Berdal, 1996: 74-75). However, the reality is that while a holistic approach has often been advocated, putting this into practice involves considerable challenges. The difficulties include the short time frames demanded for starting DDR when an agreement is imminent; the large number of actors involved, often with different organisational cultures and agendas; and the fact that funding is more likely to be available for dealing with the hardware (disarmament), rather than for the longer term work of reintegration.

DDR is perhaps best viewed as an integrated *set* of processes, which are themselves a part of the wider peace process. It arises from the peace processes, and has the capacity to provide positive or negative feedback into it. The possible feedbacks arise from confidence building between parties, opening lines of communication, addressing interests, and providing incentives at a number of levels. It can also bring tensions to the surface, especially when resources or jobs are to be divided up, or

where local commanders' interests diverge from those of their leaders or the combatants. DDR cannot bring political agreement on its own, and a peace process which collapses will leave a DDR programme in an untenable position, as seen in the failure of the first DDR programme in Angola (Gomes Porto and Parsons, 2003).

Colletta et al (1996: 18) say:

Successful long-term reintegration can make a major contribution to national conflict resolution and to restoration of social capital. Conversely, failure to achieve reintegration can lead to considerable insecurity at the societal and individual levels, including rent-seeking behaviour through the barrel of a gun.

Besides the growing recognition of the importance of an integrated approach, DDR's essential link with recovery programming and development is also more widely acknowledged now. The UNDP *Practice Note* on DDR (2005a: 5) describes it as 'a complex process, with political, military, security, humanitarian and socioeconomic dimensions', and says that while much of the programme focuses on ex-combatants, 'the main beneficiaries of the programme should ultimately be the wider community' (2005b: 11). DDR must therefore be 'conceptualized, designed, planned and implemented within a wider recovery and development framework.' (2005b: 6).

The *Practice Note* is part of a growing body of guides, manuals, and best practice on DDR which has been developed in recent years. One project which brought together a wide range of practitioners, donors and researchers to review best practice was the Stockholm Initiative on DDR (SIDDR, 2006). An even more comprehensive guide and field manual which addresses many of these issues is the UN's *Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS)* (2006). It amounts to a significant initiative to promote an integrated approach between UN agencies and other actors in the DDR process. The involvement of ex-combatants, communities, and other stakeholders in DDR is implicit in the guiding principles of the IDDRS: the *Operational Guide* (2006: 26) says that the process should be:

- People-centred;
- Flexible, transparent and accountable;
- Nationally-owned;
- Integrated; and
- Well planned.

The case for a participatory approach to DDR

Participation by stakeholders in DDR programmes can be broken down according to the phase of DDR, to the type of involvement (planning, implementing, or evaluation), and to the stakeholder (ex-combatants, communities, or national agencies).

At the assessment stage, the *Operational Guide* to IDDRS (2006: 67-71) gives detailed guidance on carrying out an assessment as part of the planning process for DDR, and this includes participatory assessments carried out by beneficiaries. It deals with those in rural settings, with the help of a facilitator, as well as women, youth and

children, whose input can often be overlooked. The separate process of monitoring and evaluation generally takes place once a programme is underway or completed. The experience of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) in a weapons collection context is relevant, and this process has been described in detail by Mugumya in Mali (2004a), Albania (2004b), and Cambodia (2005).

The question of participation arises at national, local and community level. The aspects of participation at each of these levels are set out in the following table.

Table 1: Identification of possible variables

Level	Structures	Indicators of participation (independent variable)	Indicators of dependent variable (or intervening variable for items marked with *)
National – political level	National Commission on DDR.	Involvement of prime minister and relevant ministers; range of former adversaries involved.	Political buy-in.* Sense of ownership (applies to all levels).* Better implementation of peace agreement.* Reduction in number and effectiveness of spoilers.*
National – implementing level	Secretariat to National Commission, or other implementing body.	Good links to other stakeholders.	Relevant and sustainable programming (applies to all levels below this also).
Regional	Regional politicians and administrators.		As above. Better planning for economic reintegration in particular.
Community	Stakeholders' forum. Communication channels and contact points.	Consultation with host communities in particular. Involvement of women and youth. Use of traditional healing rituals.	Reduction in resentment, or perception of unfair treatment. Economic initiatives better planned.* Benefits of economic reintegration more widely shared.* Greater capacity in local community (to deal with economic issues, for example)*
Ex-combatants and those associated with armed groups	Stakeholders' forum. Communication channels and contact points.	Consultation during Demobilisation phase. Participation in decisions about economic reintegration (e.g. about training opportunities). Realistic understanding of what benefits they are entitled to. Knowing who is their point of contact.	More effective and sustainable economic and social reintegration. Reconciliation facilitated. Return to conflict less likely. Effects of trauma lessened at community and individual level.* Lower level of re-recruitment to armed groups (esp regarding regional conflicts).

Individual	Participation through local community structures, and through specific groups (for farmers, women, youth, business people, etc).		
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Measuring a participatory approach

Several measures are proposed to estimate the level of participation. They can be grouped together under the headings of (a) Process, (b) Structures, and (c) Perception.

(a) Process

This concerns the way in which DDR is planned and implemented. A participatory approach would be indicated by the following elements, some of which are necessary (although not sufficient) conditions:

- Existence of a communications strategy, and its appropriateness and effectiveness (especially regarding management of expectations, informing people of their entitlements, and opening up a channel for feedback from beneficiaries to planners).
- The number of indigenous NGOs involved in planning and implementing DDR; the degree (or depth) of their involvement; and the level and chronological stages of programming where they were involved. Also, the role and level of responsibility of national staff (as opposed to internationals).
- The duration, and quality of career counselling for ex-combatants.
- The quality of labour market survey prior to planning reintegration, and consultation with local businesses, before economic reintegration is attempted.
- Openness to the use of traditional cleansing or forgiveness ceremonies, where appropriate, and communities' involvement in identifying, adapting or devising such events.

(b) Structures

The existence of channels of communication and representative structures – both formal and informal – are fundamental to a participatory process. Elements include:

- Representation (by individuals or organisations) for ex-combatants and communities, whether *de facto* or formally appointed. More specifically, the level of representation of female ex-combatants.
- Recognition of these by implementing agencies.
- Forum for stakeholders, and the range of stakeholders who are represented.

- Communication channels, including nominated individuals and designated contact points within implementing agencies.

(c) Perception

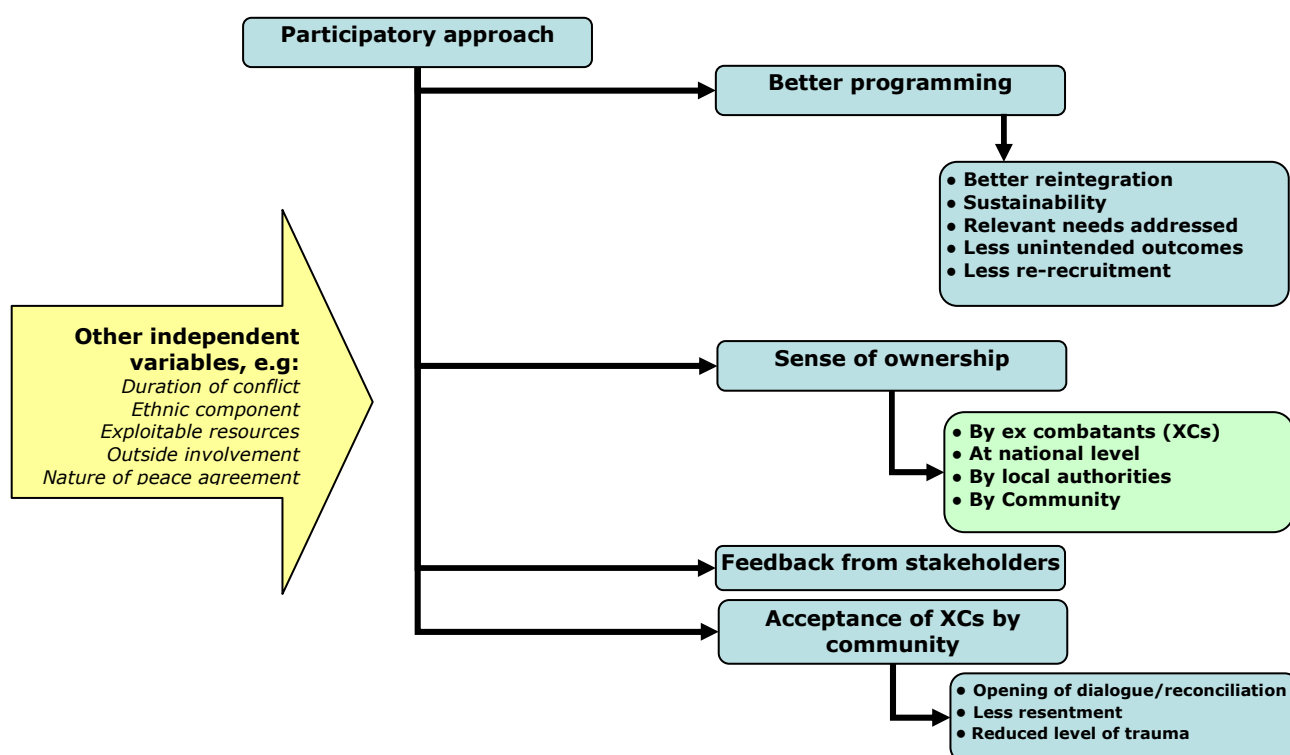
The perception of ex-combatants and communities about the extent to which they were consulted can be a function of several factors besides a participatory process. They can reflect a general level of dissatisfaction, economic insecurity, disillusionment, or other difficulties. Questions about perceptions must be carefully framed, to ensure that the response relates to participation rather than to other factors. Relevant indicators include:

- Stakeholders' own perception of whether they have been consulted or listened to.
- Expressions of dissent, dissatisfaction, or demonstrations.
- Existence of misunderstandings about the process or expectations which do not match reality.

A model to explain the interaction of a participatory approach (the independent variable) with other dependent variables is set out below. The dependent variables are (a) better and more sustainable demobilisation and reintegration programming, and (b) more sustainable and effective social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants.

One of the main difficulties is that several other independent variables also have a bearing on these same outcomes, so a significant number of related variables have to be controlled for. These include factors relating to the conflict itself (duration, natural resources, ethnic component, outside actors, etc); to the context (nature of the peace agreement, regional conflict, ethnic diversity, etc); and to other aspects of the DDR programme (duration, comprehensiveness, timing, level of benefits, etc). In order to control for these variables, within-country comparisons in both Sierra Leone and Liberia are proposed.

Figure 1: Draft model of how a participatory approach relates to other variables



The contribution of a participatory approach

The benefits of participatory DDR are hypothesised to include:

- Building long term national capacity for reintegration and therefore development;
- Dealing with perceptions that those with guns are being rewarded, and the poor example which that sets in terms of governance and accountability in the post-conflict era;
- Enhancing the sense of ownership at national and community level, rather than dependency;
- More appropriate services for marginalized groups such as children, women, and the disabled;
- Promoting reconciliation and acceptance of ex-combatants, where the whole community can see that it benefits from the process in its entirety;
- Supporting implementation of the peace agreement, by reducing the scope for spoilers through an effective and sustainable DDR programme, and encouraging the wider community to 'buy in' to the process.

Local ownership

A greater sense of ownership among stakeholders can be linked to a participatory approach, or undermined by one which excludes or alienates them. Such exclusion

can arise quite unintentionally, and it can have repercussions for various groups' attitudes to the peace process and reconciliation. An opportunity to listen to the fears and perspectives of, for example, a local community or a group of demobilizing fighters, is a key moment. Even if the course of action remains unchanged, the feeling of having been listened to has a bearing on attitudes to a policy – while the sense that one's opinion has not been heard will worsen any disaffection.

Maintaining a focus on participatory process and recognising that the 'how' is often more important than the 'what' – Participatory processes can render civilian and co-operative life within communities a more attractive option than engaging in war and violence.

(Bell and Watson, 2006: 5)

Certain groups are at risk of being marginalized during the DDR process unless their situation is given specific attention. There are many reasons why specific attention needs to be paid to women and to children who have been associated with fighting forces (CAFF), for example, through a participatory approach. Women and girls have not benefited from DDR programmes to the same extent as others (Specht, 2006: 87–96; de Watteville, 2002; McKay and Mazurana, 2004; Bouta, 2005; Brett and Specht, 2004).

Participation is also relevant to the communities which are expected to host ex-combatants – some of whom may have suffered at the hands of armed groups. Civil society groups are a rich source of expertise, with access to informal networks and information at national, local and community level (Dzinesa, 2006). Nevertheless, they can be overlooked by international NGOs and IGOs. From an economic perspective, it is within these communities that ex-combatants will attempt to forge a new livelihood: the community provides the employers, the market, and context for making a new life. Consultation can help to identify precarious local economic activities which may in fact be undermined by vocational assistance to ex-combatants during reintegration. Besides the needs assessment and planning phases, a participatory approach is also relevant during implementation, ongoing monitoring, and evaluation. It can help to establish the legitimacy of the programming and those implementing it, in the eyes of the participants.

A model being used by the World Bank which is relevant is Community-Driven Development (CDD). According to Specht (2007: 36), it is 'a particularly useful approach in receiving communities where both physical and social structures have deteriorated and institutional capacity is minimal.'

An incentive programme which only includes ex-combatants risks increasing the level of resentment which is sometimes felt among receiving communities. There can be rejection of ex-combatants, stigma, and increased tension over unresolved issues of transitional justice and impunity.

Participation both requires a certain level of capacity within civil society organisations, if they are take part in a meaningful way. A participatory approach can in fact contribute to building the social capital which may have been damaged during a conflict. Building local capacity, and therefore sustainability, is important in

facilitating participation, and in reducing the risk of dependency on resource flows from international actors which are time-limited.

Information campaigns, expectations and resentment

One of the key aspects of participation is effective two-way communication, including information campaigns for ex-combatants and local communities. The need to communicate effectively has been highlighted in Liberia, where significant proportions of these groups were labouring under misapprehensions about the benefits they were entitled to, with all the attendant dangers of resentment over timing or unrealistic expectations (UNDP, 2005b).

Resentment can be driven by the *perception* of what incentives are available for other groups, even more than the reality. DDR without an effective communications or public awareness strategy can have ‘disastrous’ consequences, according to Muggah (2005):

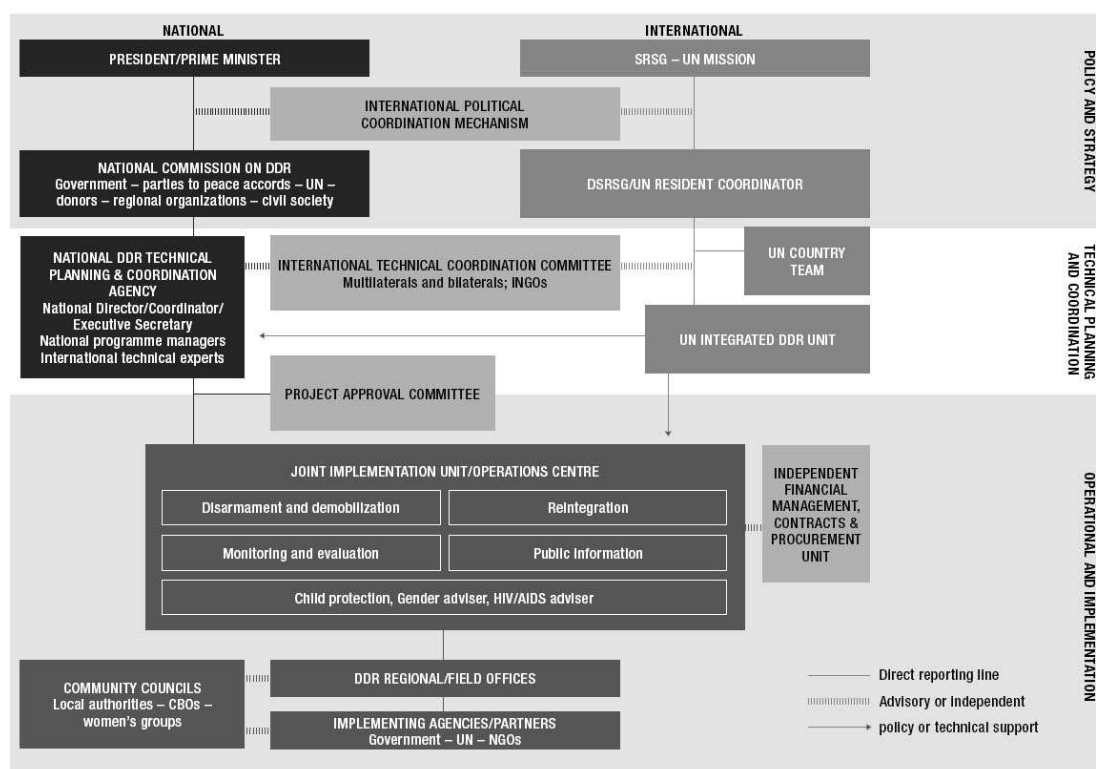
The pursuit of DDR in West Africa and the Philippines has shown how the mismanagement of expectations and inadequate preparation for disarmament generated counterproductive, even lethal, outcomes. In Liberia more than three times the anticipated number of claimants demanded ‘reintegration’ benefits and rioted when turned away. Similarly, a reintegration industry has been spawned in Mindanao, where international agencies such as the UNDP and USAID continue to support tens of thousands more MNLF excombatants and dependants than are believed to exist.

(Muggah, 2005: 246-247)

UN IDDRS structure for national and international actors

The IDDRS proposes a complex structure to marry up the wide range of international agencies with various national structures. These have the aim of promoting national ownership and generating political will. It proposes a body which is usually called the National Commission on DDR (NCDDR), headed if possible by the prime minister as an indication of national ‘buy in’ to the process, with involvement by ministers who deal with relevant areas, such as labour. In addition there is a national DDR agency, or secretariat to the Commission, which deals with implementation. On the international side, overall responsibility for all UN agencies usually rests with the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), and there also a coordinating body for the international agencies. The two sides come together formally in a Joint Implementation Unit (JIU). The structure is set out in Figure 3.30.1 of the *Operational Guide to the IDDRS* (2006: 83), which is reproduced below.

Figure 2: Model for national DDR institutional framework proposed by IDDRS.



Field work carried out so far

Preliminary field work took place in Sierra Leone and Liberia in November 2007. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with a range of stakeholders. These included ex-combatants (men and women, and former Children Associated with Fighting Forces); community representatives; and agencies involved in DDR. Self-reintegrated ex-combatants may be under-represented, when compared with ex-combatants who went through DDR. Certain trends emerged in interviews conducted in this pilot study, and are summarised in this section. Concerns about individuals' immediate economic situation, payment of benefits, and suspicions about mismanagement of funds, seemed to top the list of concerns. Also important is the sense of having been listened to.

On the positive side, the involvement of indigenous NGOs and those with a track record of working on the ground is significant, when compared with recently arrived agencies who were not as familiar with the communities, and which may not have had the necessary links with stakeholders. The number of national staff (as opposed to internationals), and the degree of responsibility given to them, also emerged as a factor which facilitates a more participatory approach.

Children's agencies have greater experience than others in consulting both participants and local communities. Consultation with communities prior to returning children is in fact a child safety issue, as the returnees might not be welcomed. This work is labour intensive – children's Interim Care Centres (ICCs) had a much higher

proportion of staff to XCAFFs than adult camps. These staff were actively involved in tracing family members, and visiting the communities in advance of any return.

UNICEF's Community Education Investment Program (CEIP) provided assistance to schools for all their pupils, in addition to supplying child returnees with books and other support. By recognising the community's needs, and the risk of resentment, this action helped to promote acceptance of the returnees. However, this is incentive-driven, and is not the same as participation *per se*. Similarly, some communities benefited from locally employed staff and salaries, and informal provision of benefits such as food, when demobilisation camps or Interim Care Centres were located in their areas.

Traditional cleansing or forgiveness ceremonies can play a role in facilitating acceptance of children returning to their communities. Local staff are more likely than international staff to be sensitive to these possibilities, and to be in a position to help communities to make use of such rituals.

Role play and exercises such as "Theatre for Development" have been used effectively to facilitate dialogue and understanding between XCAFF and local communities, when problems arose between them while children were based at an Interim Care Centre.

The Arms for Development programme run by the UNDP in Sierra Leone, which can be seen as a follow up to DDR among the civilian population, offers an interesting model of extensive prior consultation with communities. Communities are asked to set their own development priorities, engage in the process of handing in arms, select the project to be supported, and generally own the process. Most of the UNDP staff working on the programme are indigenous.

On the negative side, certain patterns also emerged. As in other countries, delayed payment of promised benefits (sometimes due to cash flow problems) causes concern, resentment and mistrust among ex-combatants. Demonstrations by ex-combatants outside the UNDP in Liberia were still occurring as recently as October 2007, due to delays in providing reintegration training or payments for several thousand people who had not completed DDR. Funding for this residual caseload of 9,000 ex-combatants (out of a total of 103,000) was secured from the Norwegian government, and the programme was due to restart towards the end of 2007.

There can be a gulf between the perceptions about the degree of consultation, when comparing the views of UN/national agencies and those of certain (but not all) ex-combatants. Some examples of poor information flow and inaccurate or out-of-date information include the way details emerged of the programme for ex-combatants in Liberia (mentioned above), where sharply different perceptions existed about what was happening.

A prime example of rushed, badly-planned disarmament was seen at the start of the DDR process in Liberia in December 2003. The initial disarmament scheme was suspended after chaotic scenes when many more people turned up than expected, and payment of benefits to all was not possible. It was resumed the following April, but only after 48 "generals" from three factions were involved in extensive consultations.

Some local NGOs say this was an example of the UN failing to consult them beforehand.

Some of the factors behind women's lower rates of participation in DDR programmes include stigma, and fear of being identified as an ex-combatant as a result of taking part in DDR. This was compounded by the question of identity cards being issued to ex-combatants so that they could claim benefits such as training allowances. There were fears of how this national database of names and photographs would be used.

Some of those working with ex-combatants went as far as describing the situation as "a time bomb", especially if arms became available. This was attributed to untreated trauma, suspicion about mismanagement of funds, and dissatisfaction about payment of benefits. There has been very limited psycho-social support for the very many adults who have suffered from trauma. This issue was also identified by some ex-combatants themselves.

Some ex-combatants may sell their demobilisation card (which entitles them to benefits) or their business start-up kits, for immediate cash. Some are unable to budget, or make long term plans. Drug dependency is also an issue. Educational benefits in Liberia are seen as inadequate by some ex-combatants, who said they were entitled to only one year's educational fees at third level, with no provision for living expenses.

Consultation with ex-combatants via their commanders can be problematic: the commanders may put their own interests first, and can retain considerable power over those who used to be under them. Some, however, have acted as effective representatives, and many have influence as advocates for ex-combatants long after demobilisation.

Career counselling, at the time that ex-combatants make choices about which vocational training option to pursue, is a key element in any participatory approach. Ex-combatants' perception of whether they have been consulted or listened to appears to be related to (a) expectations about benefits, (b) suspicions about mismanagement of funds, and (c) current economic well-being. Their response to questions about participation is coloured by their general level of satisfaction with DDR agencies in general.

Formal structures to consult ex-combatants may be of benefit, as well as open and informal communication channels. For example, some officials were in regular phone contact with representatives or ex-combatants in Liberia. For these structures to work, it requires (1) formation of representative organisations, (2) recognition of these by implementing agencies, (3) a forum for all stakeholders (not just ex-combatants), and (4) additional designated contact points and communication channels.

In addition to the formal DDR process, parallel programming exists for ex-combatants. This offers possibilities for less conventional approaches to reintegration. The exclusion of many girls in Sierra Leone prompted parallel programming from LNGOs, with support from INGOs and other agencies, such as the "Girls Left Behind" programme run by Caritas Makeni.

Public involvement in a peace process and in drawing up a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (at which point DDR is often specified) has been cited as a form of “participation”. However, the degree of civil society involvement is not normally significant, in a context where arms, territory and traditional hard power often dominate the discourse. The advantage of any such involvement may be the fact that it takes place early on in the process, when the wording of texts on DDR has not been finalised.

Further research

Further field work is proposed in Sierra Leone and Liberia, involving interviews, focus groups, and possibly a structured survey instrument.

A small number of datasets exist from surveys of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone and Liberia, and these may prove relevant for further research. One of the most comprehensive datasets is that gathered in Sierra Leone in 2003, a year after the end of the armed conflict, by Humphreys and Weinstein (2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008). This put more than 200 questions to a randomly-selected sample of 1,041 ex-combatants. They also contain some useful pointers on avoiding potential problems in wordings and definitions in the survey instrument, such as the fact that ex-combatants may have changed faction several times. There may also be context-specific understandings of terms such as “employment” or “acceptance”, in conflict-affected societies where the unemployment rate is officially put at 70 per cent or more.

Pugel’s survey of 590 ex-combatants in Liberia (2006, 2007, and forthcoming) used an instrument based on that of Humphreys and Weinstein. The results point to significant improvements in quality of life for ex-combatants who have completed DDR, compared with those who have not. Surveys of ex-combatants in other contexts include Angola (Gomes Porto, Alden, and Parsons, 2007) and Burundi (Uvin, 2007).

Conclusion

The benefits of taking a holistic, integrated approach to DDR were recognised early on in its development. However, it took some years for specific guidelines to be drawn up which would help to make this a reality. At this stage, the contribution of a participatory approach is not widely recognised in explicit terms, although elements are incorporated in some of the more recent best practice initiatives. Qualitative data already gathered points to a positive contribution which can be made by a participatory approach. The development of more explicit indicators for measuring both participation and sustainability are key challenges in progressing this research.

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