

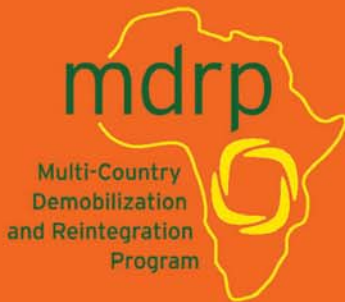


Working Paper No.1

September 2006

Reintegration Assistance for Ex-Combatants:

*Good Practices
and Lessons
for the MDRP*



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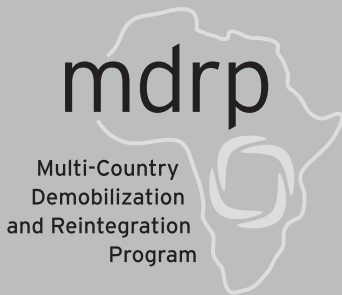
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Sarah Michael



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Abbreviations

DDR — Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

DRC — Democratic Republic of Congo

ESAF — El Salvador Armed Forces

GSM — Global System for Mobile Communications

HIV/AIDS — Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

MDRP — Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program

M&E — Monitoring and Evaluation

MIS — Management Information System

NGO — Non-Governmental Organization

PN — National Police (El Salvador)

RDRP — Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program

TGE — Transitional Government of Ethiopia

UNITA — União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)

Executive Summary

- Reintegration is the personal process through which ex-combatants leave their fighting units, and rejoin and are accepted by civilian social groups such as families or communities. The process can be complex and deeply personal, occurring along an individual timeline and involving different social, economic and psychological dimensions. Support to ex-combatant reintegration has been shown to be a crucial element of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process and contributes to a successful transition to peace.

- The targeting of reintegration support to ex-combatants is generally stipulated in political settlements or peace agreements negotiated at the end of a conflict. Targeted assistance does not require a trade-off between the needs of the individual and those of the community – indeed, experience illustrates that assistance provided specifically to ex-combatants can also be community-oriented and be linked to parallel community development initiatives and reconciliation and reintegration programs for other war-affected populations.

- A mix of cash and in-kind entitlements and services, generally referred to as ‘reinsertion’ support, is commonly the first element of reintegration assistance to ex-combatants. This transitional assistance enables ex-combatants and their dependents to settle in their desired location of return and to sustain themselves in the short term. Reinsertion support should be limited to a period of between six and twelve months after demobilization – the expected timeframe for medium-term reintegration support to be launched and begin to have an impact.

- Income and income earning capacity are among the most important factors in ex-combatants’ own perception of their personal reintegration success. Medium-term reintegration programming should therefore assist ex-combatants to develop relevant livelihood skills. Economic support options available

through reintegration programs should be consistent with the socio-economic profile of ex-combatant beneficiaries and with local economic trends and opportunities.

- Reintegration programming can play an important role in promoting opportunities for ex-combatants to participate in the social, cultural, religious and political life of their communities, thus fostering reconciliation, trust and social harmony between ex-combatants and local communities. Such social reintegration support can be of particular benefit to ex-combatants who have spent many years away from home, or were part of defeated armed forces or armed groups responsible for atrocities against civilians.

- The experiences of past and present reintegration programs, including those of the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP), suggest that best practices in reintegration program design include: planning of pilot activities for reintegration support at the start of the DDR process; investing in regular communication and outreach with ex-combatants, communities and other stakeholders; ensuring specialized services and program adaptations for vulnerable groups of ex-combatants including children, women and the disabled; and building broad-based partnerships that facilitate the evolution of reintegration activities into wider development programming.

- As evidenced by the successes and challenges of reintegration programs around the world, the institutional structures and arrangements governing DDR and reintegration programs can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of these operations. Minimum institutional features of particular relevance include: strong national ownership; the separation of political oversight and technical implementation bodies; decentralized program structures; timely and regular monitoring and evaluation; rigorous financial systems and controls; and a clear exit strategy.

Part 1: Background

I. Introduction

“ *The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants is necessary to establishing peace and restoring security, which are in turn a pre-condition for sustainable growth and poverty reduction.* ”

- The World Bank¹

1. **The Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) is the largest program of its kind in the world, designed to support an estimated 400,000 ex-combatants in nine countries in the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa.** Drawing on emerging lessons from the MDRP to date, as well as from the experiences of other reintegration programs around the world, this paper explores the policies, programs and institutional arrangements that best facilitate ex-combatant reintegration. It is intended to support MDRP policy-makers, practitioners and donor partners, as well as other actors in the broader fields of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

2. The rationale for the paper’s focus on reintegration is three-fold. First, reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life is widely accepted as the most challenging aspect of the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process which follows peace agreements and political settlements – as well as one of the most critical elements of a successful transition to peace. Second, a user-friendly document with comprehensive and practical information on reintegration program design and implementation has yet to be developed. Finally, as most MDRP-supported programs are now fully entered into the reintegration process, program management and implementation staffs are eager to learn from each other’s programs and experiences.

3. The paper is organized into five sections. The first defines reintegration and examines key concepts, as well as existing rationales for targeted reintegration assistance to ex-combatants. Three common approaches to reintegration assistance – namely reinsertion support, economic reintegration support and social reintegration support – are then outlined in the second section, and examples given from past reintegration programming. In section three, real-world experiences are used to highlight best practices in the design and implementation of reintegration assistance programs. Finally, the concluding section provides lessons from past and existing reintegration programs, including those supported by the MDRP.

II. Reintegration Assistance: Key Concepts

4. **Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs assist former combatants to transition from military to civilian life and make an important contribution to wider societal shifts from conflict to peace.** Disarmament², demobilization³ and reintegration each possess a

¹ World Bank (2002)

discrete aim, but are also heavily interlinked, overlapping and reinforcing. There is no single blueprint for DDR processes, which take place in a wider framework of local, national and, often, regional, peace-building and reconstruction – as represented in Figure 1. While a logical sequence of disarmament followed by demobilization followed by reintegration is generally observed, in some cases these processes may overlap, occur in parallel, or even take place spontaneously with little external support. This paper focuses specifically on reintegration programming as a subset of DDR activities.

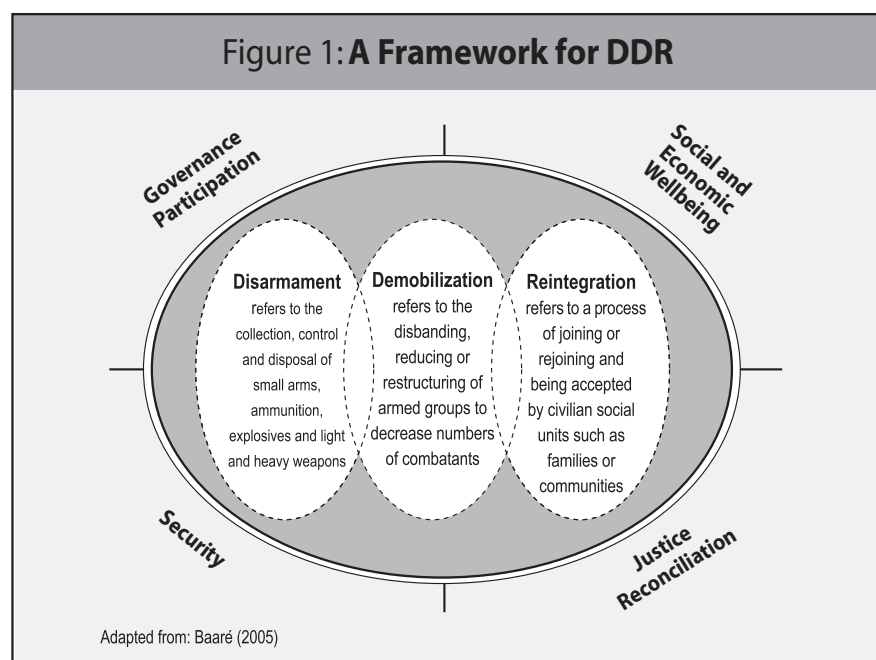
5. **Reintegration refers to the process of an ex-combatant joining or rejoining, and being accepted by, civilian social units such as families or communities.**⁴ It is a complex process with social, economic and psychological dimensions. In the social domain, reintegration implies community acceptance of an ex-combatant and their family, and their ability to participate in local events and decision-making to the same extent as other community members.⁵ Economic reintegration is achieved when ex-combatants attain a level of well-being which is commensurate with overall community standards. However, reintegration is a deeply personal process; each ex-combatant reintegrates in a unique way, in a specific environment, according to his or her own ambitions and opportunities and along an individual timeline. As such, a broad perspective

on reintegration assistance is key – acknowledging the role of both short-term support in the immediate post-demobilization period as well as the role of medium-term assistance after resettlement into civilian society.

6. **Ex-combatants and their dependents are the primary agents of reintegration.** Beyond the will and initiative of ex-combatants, successful reintegration also depends on the receptivity, capacity and commitment of other actors, and on the political, legal, economic, cultural and religious environments in question. Community leaders, governments, civil society organizations, religious groups, private sector firms, multilateral organizations, donor agencies and other external actors do not ‘reintegrate’ ex-combatants. However, their support can greatly contribute to ex-combatants’ individual reintegration processes.

7. **Self-reintegration by ex-combatants is a process that occurs over time.** Many ex-combatants find their own individual solutions to reintegration and require little or only short-term support. Yet evidence from a wide range of countries also illustrates that reintegration assistance accelerates the process, and is viewed by ex-combatants as a valuable factor that contributes to their reintegration.⁶ Ex-combatants of vulnerable sub-groups—whether socially, culturally, politically or economically-defined—may particularly benefit from access to specialized or additional assistance during their reintegration process.

8. **There is an important nexus between reintegration assistance to ex-combatants and wider community development.** Targeted reintegration assistance to ex-combatants in the immediate post-conflict period is a transitional form of support which promotes the very social stability necessary as a foundation for wider community development



² Disarmament refers to the collection, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons (World Bank 2002)

³ Demobilization refers to the disbanding, reducing or restructuring of armed groups to decrease numbers of combatants (World Bank 2002)

⁴ Kingma (2002)

⁵ Body and Brown (2005)

⁶ Creative Associates International Inc. (1996); Creative Associates International Inc. (1998)

programming.⁷ It does not, as is often assumed, require a trade-off between the needs of the individual and those of the community; assistance provided to ex-combatants based on their eligibility as individuals can also be community-oriented. Among the wider community contributions and public goods that can be supported by reintegration programs are: stimulation of information-sharing, learning and participation among the families and neighbors of ex-combatants as well as among other community members, local leaders and community-based organizations; facilitation of reconciliation and dialogue within the community; investment in developing community resources such as educational materials and health equipment; funding of construction or local infrastructure repair; strengthening of the capacity of local actors and institutions; and provision of direct services to vulnerable members of the population alongside ex-combatants (such as through subsidizing the schooling of children whose families are below the poverty line when supporting the education of former child soldiers). Targeted reintegration assistance should be promoted in parallel to, and be linked with, community-driven development initiatives and reconciliation and reintegration programming for other war-affected populations.

9. **The political, social and economic risks and opportunities associated with the post-conflict environment necessitate a specific strategy of targeted reintegration support to ex-combatants.** Perhaps the strongest of the imperatives for targeted reintegration support to ex-combatants is the fulfillment of the political commitments that have brought about the

end of a given conflict. In many cases, the negotiated political settlement included in a peace agreement will include special provisions for the demobilization of combatants and requirements for provision of targeted reintegration support. The failure to live up to such negotiated commitments could jeopardize a fragile peace and lead to the resumption of hostilities. Abiding by these commitments and delivering on political promises, meanwhile, can build confidence in the state and the peace process.

10. Furthermore, the societal costs of failed ex-combatant transitions risk being unacceptably high. Some ex-combatants who are unable to establish sustainable livelihoods and roots in an accepting community may be drawn into criminal activities, violent political opposition or be re-recruited or remobilized as combatants or mercenaries – posing a threat to peace and security in their communities, countries and wider regions.⁸ Ex-combatants can pose a particularly high risk in this regard due to their familiarity with weapons and violence and their ability to reorganize. The destabilizing effect of such outcomes on often fragile peace-building and security processes can have long-term costs for an entire population. Reintegration support offers ex-combatants a chance to channel their skills and experience into positive roles in peace-building, economic development and post-conflict reconstruction.

11. Lastly, in some contexts, targeted support can be justified as a means to offset or compensate ex-combatants when their demobilization from an

Box 1. Ex-combatants may benefit from different types of reintegration assistance depending on their....

- Age
- Gender
- Marital status
- Number of dependents
- Level of education
- Formal qualifications
- Work experience
- Reasons for involvement in the conflict
- Original combat force type and structure
- Military rank
- Duration and nature of combat experience
- Duration of time away from home
- Community of return
- Health Status (incl. disability, chronic illness)

⁷ MDRP (2004a)

⁸ Kingma (2002), MDRP (2004a), UNDP (2005c)

armed unit has resulted in the loss of paid employment, livelihood, job security, social standing, identity or social networks.⁹ The effect of these losses is often compounded for ex-combatants from many irregular forces by their lack of technical and social skills and experiences relevant to civilian life. Reintegration support can also help to compensate former combatants for the pressures they were put under to join armed groups, and the opportunities that they forewent during their armed service.

12. Ex-combatants are a heterogeneous group, as illustrated in Box 1, and targeted reintegration assistance must recognize their diverse needs and opportunities. As such, it must be flexible and adaptable, offering multiple and transparent options so that ex-combatants from all backgrounds can benefit. Ensuring access is a key principle in organizing reintegration support for ex-combatants, particularly across types of combat force (government, opposition), and across genders. Within the programs supported by the MDRP, for example, ex-combatants are eligible for reintegration support irrespective of former rank or military affiliation, and all ex-combatants are allowed to choose their settlement destination freely.¹⁰ Particular adaptation may be required to ensure that vulnerable ex-combatants, such as former child soldiers, female ex-combatants, disabled and chronically ill ex-combatants, and ex-combatants who resettle in remote areas, are able to actually access the reintegration assistance for which they are eligible.

13. Clearly defining combatant status and developing practical mechanisms to verify who is – and is not – a combatant are pre-requisites to implementing reintegration activities targeted to ex-combatants.¹¹ The identification of combatant status is most often established by peace accords and/or determined by technical criteria such as an individual's affiliation with a known armed group or proof of military skills. Among the different reintegration programs supported through the MDRP, the eligibility for 'ex-combatant' status thus differs depending on country context and the terms of individual peace agreements. Narrowly defining combatants as those who operate within a military structure and actively engage in armed conflict may be sufficient in contexts involving conventional military forces. However, particularly

when dealing with armed and guerilla forces, DDR processes may also define as combatants those who took an active role in non-combat military activities (e.g. porters, nurses, drivers, cooks, messengers, intelligence staff, fundraisers, etc.) or who participated on a 'part-time' basis, sharing their weapon with other unit members.¹² Whatever the definition of combatant status, ensuring that screening processes at disarmament and demobilization are gender and age-sensitive is vital to ensuring that eligible women and children who wish to register can do so, and are thus later able to access targeted reintegration support.¹³

⁹ World Bank (1993), Kingma (2002), Arthy (2003), MDRP (2004a)

¹⁰ World Bank (2002), MDRP (undated)

¹¹ Richards et al (2003), MDRP (2004a), Schroeder (2005), MDRP and UNIFEM (2006)

¹² This approach also conforms to established protocols (i.e. Cape Town principles) for dealing with child soldiers

¹³ Schroeder (2005)

Part 2: Reintegration

I. Types of Reintegration Assistance

14. **Reintegration support for ex-combatants includes both short- and medium-term assistance.** Initially, ex-combatants may receive a mix of cash and in-kind entitlements and services – often referred to as ‘reinsertion’ support. This is intended to meet the initial basic settlement needs that they and their dependents may have. Short-term reinsertion support is generally followed by medium-term assistance, which can be roughly broken down into two types. The first, ‘economic reintegration,’ strives to aid ex-combatants to find a sustainable economic livelihood. The second, ‘social reintegration,’ aims to refamiliarize ex-combatants with aspects of civilian life and to foster opportunities for ex-combatants to participate in the social, cultural, religious and political life of their communities.

15. Reintegration assistance is offered in many different forms. Some of the most common components of reintegration support within the MDRP, for example, are: information, counseling and referral services; micro-projects (including agricultural and other income-generating activities); provision of access to vocational training, formal and informal apprenticeship schemes; educational opportunities, employment generation; provision of agriculture starter kits (including inputs such as seeds and tools), and; facilitation of access to land and/or housing.¹⁴

16. **A well-designed reintegration program will have a timeframe and mix of activities that balance available resources, economic opportunities and expertise within a country with ex-combatant expectations and preferences.** Although reintegration support is often focused on meeting the economic needs of ex-combatants, a more holistic approach which addresses reintegration as a multi-dimensional process is crucial in order to support the long-term integration of ex-combatants into civilian life. Box 2 below illustrates

Box 2. What Makes Ex-Combatants Feel Reintegrated?

To determine what factors ex-combatants associated with successful reintegration in Uganda, a team of researchers conducted a factorial analysis of the impact of different variables on ex-combatants’ perceptions of their reintegration progress, and on their desire to return to military service.

The factors found to be most important to ex-combatants’ perceptions of successful reintegration include:

- Possession of a permanent place of residence (housing and access to land along cultural norms)
- Food security: having a household that is able to feed itself adequately and eating better as a result of participation in income generation activities
- Expectations for economic improvement for their household in the next year
- Feelings of self-esteem, optimism and of performing better than other veterans and/or better than while in the military
- Satisfaction with participation in programs
- Perceived improvement in their personal situation over the last three years

Source: Creative Associates International, Inc. (1998)

¹⁴ MDRP (undated)

this point, highlighting that ex-combatants associate social and psychological, as well as economic elements, with reintegration. The next three sections detail three of the most common blocks of reintegration programming: reinsertion support, economic reintegration assistance and social reintegration assistance.

A. Reinsertion Support

Reinsertion Support is...

- Financial assistance that helps ex-combatants to settle and covers the basic needs of their households in the interim after demobilization and before reintegration support becomes fully available
- A transitional mechanism to ease the dependency that structured and vertical military environments create through the supply of basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, etc.)
- Cash and/or in kind assistance
- A short-term safety net only!

17. **The objective of transitional assistance is to enable ex-combatants and their dependents to settle in their desired location of return and to sustain themselves in the short term.** Experience indicates that upon demobilization, many ex-combatants find themselves in a vulnerable financial situation.¹⁵ During this period of return to civilian life, a transitional safety net can help ex-combatants to meet their families' basic subsistence needs – including food, accommodation, medical care, children's schooling and basic household items. Reinsertion support is often also used to purchase small gifts and tokens, such as soap or cloth, which are given to family and community members as part of homecoming traditions and can support the process of social reintegration.¹⁶ In many contexts it also offers an immediate 'benefit of peace', thereby reducing the risk that ex-combatants will feel left out of a peace process to which they were subscribed by their leadership. Transitional assistance may furthermore provide a means for ex-combatants to cover their basic

needs while taking part in later economic reintegration support initiatives, such as vocational training or formal education.

18. **Within MDRP-supported programs, reinsertion support is targeted for a period of between six and twelve months after demobilization – the expected timeframe until medium-term reintegration support can be launched and begin to have an impact.** To encourage its appropriate use, reinsertion assistance is accompanied by advice and counseling prior to demobilization and after arrival in the community of settlement.¹⁷ As a general rule, reinsertion support should be commensurate with average household incomes in the location of resettlement, with prior military incomes and/or, where applicable, with the transitional safety net assistance received by internally displaced persons, refugees and other conflict-affected groups.¹⁸

19. **The most common modalities of reinsertion support are in-kind entitlements and cash payments.** In-kind entitlements vary from basic needs kits with civilian clothes, toiletry items and other basic goods, to wider reinsertion support in the form of food, household items and agricultural inputs. Basic needs kits should be provided to ex-combatants as soon as possible after demobilization, and if relevant, upon registration or encampment, as in the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) described in Box 3. While reinsertion assistance is usually standardized, some flexibility for the different needs of different groups of ex-combatants – such as women, ex-combatants with dependents or those settling in rural areas – may be required. In Angola, for instance, where early studies conducted by the Demobilization and Reintegration Project found that a large majority of ex-combatants were rurally-based, in-kind agricultural support, including seeds (maize and/or beans as regionally- and seasonally-appropriate) and basic tools, were provided to ex-combatants. This support had the benefits of being relatively inexpensive (approximately US\$50 per person), of being relatively quick to distribute given the emergency relief networks already present in the country, and of encouraging ex-combatants to return to their rural home areas. In the absence of existing NGO networks, community centers and local administration offices can also be used to

¹⁵ World Bank (2002)

¹⁶ Arthy (2003), UNDP (2005a)

¹⁷ MDRP (undated)

¹⁸ World Bank (undated)

distribute in-kind entitlements – as was done in the Nicaraguan reinsertion distribution program detailed in Appendix A.

20. **Cash reinsertion payments can serve as efficient supplements or alternatives to in-kind entitlements, and complement other forms of reintegration support.**¹⁹ Direct cash support enables ex-combatants to purchase items according to their specific preferences and needs, thereby allowing maximum flexibility and choice. Beyond direct benefits to ex-combatants, cash payments can have a positive impact on the wider community of settlement. Cash used for social and productive investments can stimulate the

local economy and strengthen the local banking sector, if present. From a program management perspective, cash payments also often have lower administrative and transaction costs than in-kind support, and allow for greater ease and speed of distribution.

21. **Cash payments can take several forms: lump sum or installment payments, which then may in turn be: standardized across all ex-combatants, adapted to ensure regional purchasing power parity, or tiered according to length of armed service, military rank, settlement location, or level of conflict-related physical illness or disability.**²⁰ Lump sum payments have the advantage of offering ex-combatants the opportunity

Box 3: Reinsertion Kits

As part of the MDRP-supported DDR program in the Democratic Republic of Congo, ex-combatants receive kits to cover their basic needs twice – first, upon their arrival at the orientation centers, when they are informed about the program and offered the choice of demobilization or integration into the new army, and second, upon departure from these centers to their chosen location of settlement. Ideally kits should be specially adapted for male, female and child ex-combatants. In particular, entitlements for female ex-combatants should include items relevant to women’s reintegration needs, such as women’s clothing, sanitary napkins, cloths for diapers, supplies for birthing, etc. Some of the common items which may be included in reinsertion kits in the DRC are described below:

Adults

At entry to orientation center:

T-shirt, trousers, underwear, socks, shoes, cup, plate, eating utensils, blanket, mat, jerry cans, toothbrush, toothpaste, bar of soap

→ *for women:* wraps, women’s slippers, packages of sanitary napkins

Upon exit from orientation center:

Duffel bag, aluminum cooking pots, plastic bucket, plastic tarpaulin for shelter, AM/FM/short-wave radio with batteries

Children

At entry to orientation center:

Underwear, slippers, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, bath towel, bar of soap, laundry soap, toilet paper, water flask, bucket for bathing and laundry, cup, blanket, satchel

→ *for boys:* t-shirts, shirts, trousers, shorts, singlets

→ *for girls:* wraps, dresses, packages of sanitary napkins. If a girl has a baby, she will also receive an additional kit of baby supplies

Upon exit from orientation center:

Shirts, trousers, singlets, underwear, belt, socks, running shoes, duffel bag, bar of soap, container of laundry soap

¹⁹ Fitz-Gerald et al (2004), Isima (2004)

²⁰ World Bank (1993), Fitz-Gerald et al (2004), Isima (2004), MDRP (2004b),

to make upfront investments – which can be difficult to achieve through smaller installment payments. The drawbacks of lump sum payments include higher potential inflationary effects on the local community, increased security risks to ex-combatants and their families, greater risks of money mismanagement and the danger that the population will perceive the cash as a payment for return of weapons.²¹ Ex-combatants who lack skills and experience with cash management, investment and formal banking and credit systems can furthermore find it difficult to maximize the productive use of lump-sum payments.²²

22. **Many of the large cash reinsertion payments provided through the MDRP national programs are divided into a series of smaller installments**, as detailed in Table 1. As a guideline, the first installment of cash reinsertion support should be received by ex-combatants within 3 months of demobilization, and

followed by subsequent installments every 1-4 months. Staggered payments, in coordination with financial training and counseling, can help to gradually inculcate the principles of financial planning, management and responsibility. Where channeled through the banking system, they help ex-combatants learn to deal with local banking and savings systems. For government-funded programs, installment allowances may also allow sponsoring governments – often themselves cash-strapped after emerging from conflict – to spread the financial burden of payments over a series of

23. **The ability to provide cash reinsertion support depends on the availability of institutions capable of receiving, distributing, accounting for and tracking payments.** A range of institutions – including banks, post offices, decentralized reintegration program offices or program outreach

Table 1. Cash Reinsertion Payments in MDRP-Supported Programs

Program Country	Differentiation of cash payments?	Guideline for date of First Payment/approximate amount of First payment	Total Cash Reinsertion Support per Beneficiary
Angola	No ²³	Upon demobilization; US\$100	US\$100
Burundi	Yes – by rank	Three months after demobilization; at least US\$250	US\$600 (average)
Democratic Republic of Congo	No	Upon demobilization; US\$50	US\$350
Republic of Congo	Yes – by date of demobilization	Within seven days of demobilization; US\$150	US\$150
Rwanda	Yes – for some target groups, by rank	Three months after demobilization; at least US\$100	US\$400 (average)
Uganda	No	Once amnesty has been obtained; approximately US\$140	US\$140

²¹ World Bank (undated)

²² World Bank (1993), Creative Associates International, Inc. (1995), Fitz-Gerald et al (2004)

²³ However, as established by the Government of Angola National Commission for DDR, combatants who entered the demobilization process after August 22, 2002 (the compliance date established in the Luena Memorandum of Understanding) were registered under the demobilization process and received reintegration assistance, but were not entitled to reinsertion support.

officers and even mobile telephone providers – may have these capabilities, as highlighted in Box 4. The specific choice of distribution agent will depend on the local context, and the range of available options. The banking system, for example, may not reach rural areas in many countries. Most important is that the chosen institution be able to provide its services in a simple, timely and transparent manner, apply a system of safeguards to ensure proper identification and tracking of beneficiaries and minimize fraud, and provide payment points which are accessible, secure and weather-resistant. In the Republic of Congo, for example, the national program opted to channel cash reintegration payments to ex-combatants through

credit unions known as ‘*mutuelles*’, which are present throughout the country. While ex-combatants are not required to open a credit union account in order to receive their benefits, the program hopes that by promoting an interface between beneficiaries and the *mutuelles*, ex-combatants will be encouraged to consider membership in the credit union – through which they can open savings accounts and access credit.

24. Cash payments and in-kind assistance to ex-combatants in the months immediately following their demobilization are important precursors to, but not substitutes for, social and economic reintegration assistance. Reintegration programs which focus solely

Box 4. Making Cash Reinsertion Payments through a Mobile Phone Network in the Democratic Republic of Congo

To provide cash reinsertion support to ex-combatants in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the MDRP-supported national program needed to find a way to make monthly reinsertion payments of US\$25 dollars to over 100,000 people located at twenty demobilization centers and at the hundreds of locations around the country in which ex-combatants settled after demobilization. Limited or absent banking systems in many areas, poor transportation and communication infrastructure, the lack of adequate fiduciary controls in many financial institutions, and the lack of an established and insurable system for transferring funds all combined to present an enormous challenge to the program and its delivery of reinsertion assistance. While one local bank accepted to provide payments at eight fixed locations, no reputable banking agency could be found to cover the rest of the country.

Following the signing of the various peace agreements in the DRC and the establishment of the Transitional Government, the mobile phone network, which had been limited to the capital and some key provincial headquarters, expanded to cover approximately ninety percent of the country. This led to the arrival of CELPAY, a mobile telephone company which provides banking and payment solutions through the use of GSM mobile phones. CELPAY developed a system by which it could use the cash it receives in local areas as payment for mobile phone services to pay out reinsertion entitlements to ex-combatants in those same locales. This system enables CELPAY to serve the whole beneficiary population of the national reintegration program while avoiding the risks and difficulties of transferring money throughout the country.

As mobile phone banking was a new initiative in the DRC, the program experienced some technical delays in launching its mobile reinsertion payment system. The system was operationalized in January 2006, however, and thousands of ex-combatants are now using a mobile phone to access their cash reinsertion benefits. This innovation offers the program both ease of management and coverage - making it possible to use a single, reliable, national entity to provide cash payments to all eligible ex-combatants, regardless of their location or level of access to the formal banking system. With the individual pin number which is given to every ex-combatant, and a GSM mobile phone, beneficiaries of the program have moreover become part of the larger moving market of cell phone banking, helping to promote local economic development.

on cash payments without parallel livelihood and investment support risk failing to help beneficiaries to save or make productive use of their allowances, and often make little contribution to ex-combatants' long-term economic reintegration.²⁴ Rather, reinsertion support should be a complement and a conduit to providing reintegration support – providing a short-term safety net and encouraging ex-combatants to resettle into communities, thus facilitating the delivery of reintegration assistance.

B. Economic Reintegration Support

Economic Reintegration Support is...

- Assistance in developing livelihood skills through which ex-combatants are able to attain the general standard of living in the community
- Not a guaranteed job or micro-enterprise opportunity
- Differentiated according to ex-combatant skills, experiences and needs, and the opportunities available to them in a given context

25. **Income and income earning capacity are among the most important factors in ex-combatants' perception of their own reintegration success.**²⁵ Ex-combatants who have a means of earning a living stand a better chance of staying engaged in the ongoing peace process and of making a positive contribution to their community and country. Yet economic vulnerability among ex-combatants is particularly high within the first two years after demobilization. Helping them attain sustainable livelihoods in a timely manner is thus particularly relevant to the successful reintegration of ex-combatants and to overall peace and security.²⁶

26. **Economic reintegration can be a particular challenge for ex-combatants who have limited education, few marketable skills and a lack of**

professional and social networks to facilitate the search for employment. In certain contexts, the impact of these trends is compounded by the stigma of having participated in an armed conflict, making it difficult for some ex-combatants to take advantage of opportunities in national post-conflict development and reconstruction – even in contexts where such opportunities exist.²⁷ A review of the MDRP-supported Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Project, for example, found that many ex-combatant beneficiaries had little or no education, few or no vocational skills, and low prospects for jobs other than manual labor or subsistence farming.²⁸ This profile is common in numerous other settings, particularly among ex-combatants from irregular forces. A survey of a group of guerilla soldiers in Zimbabwe, found that more than half of them had never before been employed, while an additional quarter were unskilled. Another study in Uganda found that over half of the soldiers surveyed possessed only military skills, or were completely unskilled. In Eritrea, many fighters from the Eritrean People's Liberation Front had never used money prior to their demobilization.²⁹

27. There is a wide range of programming options that may equip ex-combatants for successful integration into the local economy. Among these are: providing education and training services; supporting cooperatives and associations; facilitating access to land and agricultural inputs; developing pensions and other forms of service compensation; and, creating opportunities for employment and community-based rehabilitation and reconstruction. The specific mix of programming options to employ in a reintegration support program should be a function of the profile of ex-combatants, including their education and skill level, experience, age, gender, rural/urban location, interests and aspirations. Economic realities – including trends in growth, private sector development and labor markets – and the capacities and specializations of implementing and support partners should also be taken into account.³⁰ Whatever the range of options made available to beneficiaries, the perceived value of different economic

²⁴ World Bank (1993)

²⁵ Creative Associates International, Inc. (1996), Creative Associates International, Inc. (1997)

²⁶ Body and Brown (2005); in Haiti, for example, the average 10-15 day gap between ex-combatants registering for, and starting, vocational training was seen as a significant program achievement which contributed to keeping ex-combatants engaged and motivated (Dworken et al 1997).

²⁷ Ginifer (2003)

²⁸ Creative Associates International, Inc. (2006)

²⁹ World Bank (1993)

³⁰ World Bank (2002)

assistance packages should be equal and information and sensitization campaigns should clearly communicate the benefits (both short-term and long-term) of all options.

28. Reintegration programs should include a range of economic reintegration support options to serve the diverse abilities and interests of ex-combatants. As such, multiple age-, gender- and physical ability-appropriate options should be made available and, to the extent possible, access to all options should be facilitated for all eligible ex-combatants. This may require making adaptations such as providing transportation or living allowances for beneficiaries to access specialized assistance not available in their immediate community, or holding literacy or numeracy classes so that ex-combatants can meet the prerequisites

for some forms of assistance, as described in Box 5. For ex-combatants who are unable to take part in certain economic reintegration activities due to chronic illness or severe disability, one possible program adaptation is to allow alternate members of the ex-combatant's family to participate in their place.³¹ Programs may also consider providing some second-chance support to ex-combatants whose economic reintegration is progressing slowly, those who wish to change their economic reintegration option mid-stream, or those whose economic reintegration projects fail.

29. Information, counseling and referral services help ex-combatants to make informed decisions about reintegration assistance and to access complementary services. Information services

Box 5. Literacy and Numeracy Training for Ex-Combatants in Rwanda

The Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program (RDRP) assists ex-combatants to pursue socio-economic self-reliance by helping them establish income generating projects, join associations and cooperatives, and/or pursue formal education, vocational training and apprenticeship placements. In 2004, the RDRP conducted a tracer study of its beneficiaries which found that up to 10,000 lacked literacy and numeracy skills. This suggested that many would not be able to make full use of the RDRP's range of socio-economic support. To address this gap, the RDRP is developing an adult literacy and numeracy program open to all illiterate or innumerate beneficiaries. Three key design elements of the program are:

1. Classes have been specifically designed to be accessible for ex-combatants
 - Evening classes will allow ex-combatants who work during the day to take part
 - Classes will be held in three locations in each of Rwanda's 30 districts
 - Classes will be condensed to an intensive 4-month module during the agricultural dry season
2. Program designed and to be delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Education
 - This collaboration allows the program to draw on the Ministry's expertise in adult education and to utilize its network of experienced adult education teachers to deliver the training. This arrangement offers important quality and time benefits.
 - The Ministry of Education will also play a valuable role in procuring and distributing learning materials
3. Program will capitalize on existing local structures and resources to minimize costs
 - Classes will be held in local primary schools after-hours at no cost
 - District and provincial officials will take part in ongoing monitoring of the program

³¹ Body and Brown (2005), MDRP (undated)

help to clarify questions about program benefits and to manage ex-combatant expectations about employment opportunities and income-generating activities. Tools such as interest and aptitude testing, skills inventories and job profiles further aid in economic reintegration by helping ex-combatants choose the most appropriate program options for their interests and aspirations. In starting from the needs of the ex-combatant – and referring ex-combatants to the appropriate interventions (both within and outside of formal reintegration activities) to match these needs – counseling and referral services promote demand-driven reintegration programming.

30. These services also have an ongoing role throughout the life of reintegration programs. In particular, counseling can help those ex-combatants experiencing difficulties with their economic reintegration to learn from more successful colleagues, to group together into collectives or to access other livelihood or income generation projects in the community. The successful experience of El Salvador with information, counseling and referral services for ex-combatants is highlighted in Appendix B.

31. Four of the most common forms of economic reintegration assistance employed in MDRP-supported programs, to be described here, are: self-employment support, vocational training, formal education and employment creation.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

32. **Self-employment promotes economic reintegration for many ex-combatants, particularly in contexts where economic performance may be poor, unemployment levels high, and job security low.** Assistance to ex-combatants – whether as individuals or in small groups – can range from the teaching of basic money management skills, to support for petty trade and small income generating projects in the informal economy, to advanced training in business model development, financial management, marketing, legal compliance, customer service and strategic planning for entrepreneurs.³²

33. **Among MDRP-supported programs, assistance for self-employment generally includes training components, advisory services and financial or in-kind support.** Training components can include both general business skills, as well as sector-specific skills such as agricultural production techniques or handicraft production. In Angola, for example, agriculture is the primary means of livelihood for much of the population, yet food insecurity is high. Ex-combatants have therefore been supported with seeds (both vegetable seeds for stream-bank winter cultivation, and also maize, bean and groundnut seeds for rain-fed summer cultivation). They have also received basic agricultural hand tools and, in some areas, small livestock.³³

34. In addition to direct inputs, counseling is valuable to ex-combatants at multiple stages of their self-employment process. They may benefit from advice while selecting and developing business or livelihood ideas, for example, or when trying to adapt to a changing marketplace. Many reintegration programs also accept proposals from ex-combatant beneficiaries for material support to fund stock, supplies, equipment and facilities. Evaluating the merits of these financing proposals can be undertaken by central or local reintegration program officers, or by local structures, thus also involving wider communities of return in decision-making. In Rwanda, for example, locally-elected community development committees are responsible for screening and approving ex-combatant proposals.³⁴ Proposals which meet minimum viability criteria are eligible for financial assistance in the form of grants or in-kind support and projects are then guided and monitored by program staff.

35. **Grants are generally more appropriate and feasible than credit for supporting self-employment and entrepreneurship among ex-combatants.** Several factors combine to make use of credit difficult: ex-combatants generally lack working capital and collateral; post-conflict contexts are often characterized by high inflation; and appropriate financial intermediaries at the local level are often either absent or unwilling to jeopardize their current client base by providing soft or collateral-free credit to ex-combatants.³⁵ The tendency

³² National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Sierra Leone (undated)

³³ Creative Associates International, Inc. (2006)

³⁴ MDRP (2004b)

³⁵ Body and Brown (2005)

of former combatants to view credit as an ‘entitlement’ has also created serious repayment problems, so that ex-combatants are often considered high-risk credit recipients.³⁶ For example, credit targeted to female ex-combatants, disabled ex-combatants and the wives of male ex-combatants by the national reintegration commission in Sierra Leone was found to have very low repayment rates. In addition, money lent to married women was often forcibly taken by their husbands.³⁷ The risk of undermining the accountability of reintegration programs or the credibility and capital base of other micro-finance operations in the country by writing off uncollected credits further argues against the use of credit as a means of supporting self-employment among ex-combatants.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

36. **Training to develop or refine employment and livelihood skills is another common form of economic reintegration support for ex-combatants.** Vocational training can help to prepare ex-combatants for formal employment, self-employment or income generation in the informal sector – especially relevant in many post-conflict settings where poorly performing economies yield few opportunities for work in the formal sector. 99% of ex-combatants surveyed about their vocational training experiences in El Salvador, for example, felt that they were better prepared for their field of work as a result of their training.³⁸ Vocational training can also promote social reintegration by offering socializing opportunities with other civilians and stimulating optimism and hope among ex-combatants for their future well-being.

37. **Vocational training can take place through formal training centers or apprenticeships with recognized masters** and may be adapted to both urban- and rural-based ex-combatants, to ex-combatants with special needs, to market opportunities in different regions and to individual interests, aptitudes and limitations. Among programs supported by the MDRP, most vocational training components last between 3 and 9 months, focus on applied hands-on learning rather than classroom teaching and include a toolkit which contains the key tools or supplies necessary for

beneficiaries to be able to function within their chosen field upon completion of training. Ideally, kits should be distributed to ex-combatants at the start of the training program, to allow students time to master the use of their tools and to enable them to participate fully in training. The delays experienced by several MDRP-supported programs in providing kits to beneficiaries during their training programs underscore the importance of designing and procuring kits in parallel with designing vocational training activities.

38. A wide range of vocational skills have been offered to ex-combatants through the different reintegration programs sponsored by the MDRP. Training in farming, construction, carpentry, mechanics and tailoring are among the most common offerings. Responding to local market needs and ex-combatant interests, different programs have also supported training in trades including metal work, electrical work, plumbing, building materials production, fishing, animal husbandry, driving, art and artisanry, hair dressing, food processing, tourism and hospitality. Matching training options to local economic opportunities and traditions, and the supply of vocational skills to demand, is crucial to maximizing the impact of vocational training. Labor market surveys and studies of traditional production and service patterns in both formal and informal sectors are a pre-requisite to developing appropriate vocational training options, particularly in post-conflict settings with disrupted or rapidly evolving markets.

39. These studies should then be used to create training programs that: focus on the most market- and region-appropriate skills; accept market-appropriate numbers of students in individual trades; and provide informed guidance to potential beneficiaries on eventual employment options. In Sierra Leone, for example, agriculture supports over 85% of the population, yet only 16% of ex-combatants chose the agricultural training package, having found it less attractive than some of the alternatives presented.³⁹ Artisanal training, on the other hand, was heavily subscribed to, despite its low levels of market demand. To maximize their impact, agricultural training packages must move beyond mere support for subsistence agriculture, to include skills training – such as in new growing techniques or processing technologies – that can lead to income-generating activities.

³⁶ Baaré (2005)

³⁷ Arthy (2003)

³⁸ Creative Associates International, Inc. (1996)

³⁹ Arthy (2003)

Box 6. Lessons from a Vocational Training Program for ex-combatants in El Salvador

- Course length may (and should) vary according to the vocational skill being taught and the background of participants
- Close links between training programs and employment opportunities should be promoted
- Different training and employment strategies may be required for urban and rural areas and for self-employment and formal employment
- Simple vocational counseling is a valuable prerequisite to course enrollment
- Where possible, courses should integrate students of different social and political backgrounds and include both ex-combatants and civilian students

Source: Creative Associates International, Inc. (1995)

40. **Vocational training options must be representative of the capacities of ex-combatants of different education levels, ages, genders, physical conditions, regions and economic status**, as underlined in Box 6. In rural areas, for example, agricultural training should take into account regional variations in season, climate, topography, soil conditions and level of market access. In some societies, options afforded to ex-combatants may need to include female-specific training opportunities, such as handicrafts, food processing, soap-making, cloth-dyeing and tailoring skills. Moreover, training schedules may need to be adapted to women's domestic work commitments.⁴⁰ For officers and other ex-combatants with a higher education background, instruction in professional skills such as accounting, health services or computer technology may be more appropriate.⁴¹ Appendix C provides an insight into the set-up and program offerings of vocational training assistance for ex-combatants in Mozambique from 1994-1996.

41. **Once training components have been developed, existing vocational schools and instructors should be employed to implement them.**⁴² Establishing new centers for dedicated training for ex-combatants can undermine existing institutions and further marginalize ex-combatants, as well as propagate brief-case and fly-by-night training centers focused more on rent capture than on service delivery. Meanwhile, funding existing institutions has multiple benefits: it promotes incorporation of ex-combatants into wider student and social networks, capitalizes

on proven curricula and teaching methodologies, and builds capacity in national institutions – which has the added benefit of potential positive knock-on effects for the wider community.

42. **In post-conflict settings where the absorptive capacity of training institutions is often limited by the depletion of physical and human resources, developing partnerships can be a crucial step in implementing training activities.** Collaboration among local institutions and training professionals, experienced organizations from other countries or regions, and the government departments which oversee training, can help to stimulate and guide the development of a local vocational training sector. This can be an especially important contribution of reintegration programming to the country as a whole. In Rwanda, for example, the Demobilization and Reintegration Program (RDRP) is collaborating with the Ministry of Education to identify capable vocational training institutions that could provide vocational training to ex-combatants without affecting their existing calendar and students. Together, this network of training institutions, Ministry experts and RDRP staff has developed standardized six-month training modules for a wide range of vocational skills and invested in teacher training – benefits which will be enjoyed by present and future students.

43. **Regular monitoring of training institutions and methodologies is vital to ensure the quality of vocational training programs.** This includes

⁴⁰ Barth (2002), Body and Brown (2005), Schroeder (2005), Specht (undated)

⁴¹ Richards et al (2003)

⁴² Dworken et al (1997)

Box 7. Vocational Training Programs should be Monitored Regularly to Verify...

- The use of accepted curricula in order to maintain service quality and national standards
- Ex-combatant access to sufficient training materials and equipment
- That instruction is based on hands-on, applied teaching methodologies and practical skills development rather than overly theoretical, classroom-based learning
- That basic employment skills are taught alongside vocational skills
- That training is provided on a regular basis as scheduled
- That formal testing is used to assess the levels of technical competence gained by participants
- That nationally-recognized training completion certificates are provided promptly to participants and detail the student's level of achievement in terms of accepted qualifications
- That graduates are monitored to assess the relevance of their training to employability

Sources: Richards et al (1993), Arthy (2003), Tesfamichael et al (2004)

oversight of curriculum, instructional approaches, teacher qualifications, course duration, didactic materials, testing, certification and training impact, as highlighted in Box 7. Assessing the longer-term impact of skills training on ex-combatant employment is also important; it can and should be used to refine the type, focus and duration of vocational training. In cases when reintegration programs lack the capacity to conduct such oversight alone, partnerships with Ministries of Education or Professional Development can be valuable. Vocational training programs should also be monitored to ensure that they impart the literacy, confidence and marketable skills which, complemented with overall national economic recovery programs, help ex-combatants to achieve economic reintegration in difficult economic environments.⁴³

44. While many ex-combatants who participate in vocational training will be well-positioned for self-employment, most will benefit from job search assistance – both during and following training programs. Assistance with these skills can be particularly important for urban-based ex-combatants, who may never have been a part of the formal labor sector, or who may lack the strong social networks through which many people find employment. The difficulties faced by ex-combatants in several MDRP countries as well as in other parts of the world highlight

the importance of job search skills support (including resume writing, oral and written communication and interview techniques), referrals for employment opportunities, and employment promotion initiatives and training certification – as discussed in Box 8.⁴⁴

FORMAL EDUCATION

45. **Returning to formal education can be a powerful means of preparing for a new livelihood for many ex-combatants.** To pursue their desired careers, many ex-combatants are interested in enrolling in advanced education programs at tertiary or professional educational institutions. For ex-combatants who have never before been enrolled in education, who had to abandon previous study, or whose prior education was constrained by poor access or quality, primary or secondary education can support the deepening or development of the literacy, numeracy and critical thinking skills that are pre-requisites for many employment opportunities. In Sierra Leone, for example, where one-third of ex-combatants had never attended school, formal education was the mode of reintegration assistance preferred by some 30% of ex-combatants.⁴⁵ Similarly, during the 1997 demobilization process in Liberia, more than half of ex-combatants elected for education support.⁴⁶

46. **Formal education may be a particularly effective economic and social reintegration strategy**

⁴³ Ginifer (2003), Richards et al (2003), Lancaster (2005a)

⁴⁴ Colletta et al (1996), Dworken et al (1997)

⁴⁵ Ginifer (2003), UNDP (2005b)

⁴⁶ UNDP (2005b)

Box 8. Certification of Ex-Combatant Skills

Certification for training completed or skills mastered is often a low-cost but high-yield asset for ex-combatants in their job search. Some lessons around certification include:

- Certificates for training completion should be provided promptly by training institutions, as many ex-combatants will not begin their job search without them
- Certificates should comply with national standards and be recognized by the relevant national educational authority
- To avoid discrimination or stigmatization, certificates should specify the skills attained and the name of the training provider, but not the ex-combatant status of the bearer
- Certification of technical skills and experience acquired through military service and verified by a reintegration program, can help ex-combatants to convey their knowledge and abilities to potential employers

Sources: Colletta et al (1996), Mehreteab (2002), MDRP (2004c)

for child soldiers whose education was almost certainly interrupted – though it should not be limited only to those ex-combatants who had to abandon their schooling during conflict. Of particular benefit to former child soldiers are the social benefits of a return to education. Enrollment provides them with additional time in a supportive institutional setting to adjust to civilian life and with opportunities to build social networks among civilian peers.

47. **Assistance in enrolling in formal education can come in the form of subsidies, vouchers or in-kind support to cover enrollment, tuition and examination fees, books and uniforms, transport and other associated costs.** Equally important can be the adaptation of application procedures, deadlines and entrance requirements for ex-combatants who might ordinarily not qualify for education by virtue of age, lack of education documents, or inability to begin studies at the formal start of the school year. Accelerated education modules, alternative class schedules and programs which combine formal education with livelihood and life skills can also help to minimize time conflicts between education and family or work commitments.⁴⁷ Ongoing support for education should be predicated on satisfactory attendance and performance, though results may need to be assessed on a sliding scale, particularly in the first year. Education support to ex-combatants should utilize existing and

readily available institutions (whether state-, private- or NGO-run) which have established curricula and can integrate ex-combatants into civilian classes.

EMPLOYMENT CREATION

48. Employment creation for ex-combatants is often synonymous with public works projects, but numerous concerns also exist about their impact. In theory, public works programs have dual benefits: ex-combatants are gainfully employed and communities benefit from the reconstruction of conflict-affected infrastructure such as roads, water and sanitation systems, schools, health facilities and other community buildings. Public works projects which target both ex-combatants and members of the wider community also potentially offer the additional benefit of encouraging social integration and networking.

49. In practice, however, public works programs are often ineffective in teaching or reinforcing skills on which sustainable livelihoods can be built. While they often generate substantial interest among ex-combatants, they are generally also costly and require a large upfront investment of time and financial resources to prepare logistical and security arrangements.⁴⁸ Among MDRP-supported programs, for example, the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program in the Republic of Congo explored the

⁴⁷ Christian Children's Fund (1998), Verhey (2001), Body and Brown (2005)

⁴⁸ Arthy (2003), Baaré (2005), Body and Brown (2005)

possibility of including public works projects within the program's mix of reintegration options as a means of creating more visible links between individual support and community gains. The option has not been pursued to date. This is because ultimately, such an initiative was considered overly complex and expensive, and unlikely to impart sufficient marketable and specialized skills to participants. Experience also suggests that projects that group together large numbers of ex-combatants can renew insecurity and foster dependency on organized programming – of which Namibia's development brigade program, as described in Appendix D is but one example.⁴⁹

50. Among MDRP-supported programs, employment creation efforts have focused on creating or finding job placements for ex-combatants and on developing incentives to encourage employers to hire or provide apprenticeships to ex-combatants.

Following the peace process in 2002 in Angola, for example, the Government incorporated an estimated 7,000 teachers and medical professionals from the ranks of ex-UNITA fighters into relevant public sector institutions. In Burundi, an employment promotion component of the Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration Program was designed to place ex-combatants with specific technical skills into relevant positions (such as within private security firms, government agencies and construction companies). It was also developed to assist ex-combatants with past careers in public services to be hired back into the organizations for which they previously worked. As part of this program, employers interested in hiring and providing relevant learning opportunities for an ex-combatant for a minimum period of two years at a minimum monthly salary of around US\$50, can enter into a contract with the national program and receive subsidies and other support to train their new employees.

51. Reintegration programs in other countries have successfully offered similar incentives. In Ethiopia, one reintegration project subsidized 50% of ex-combatant salaries for one year and provided an additional payment to employers who extended a long-term contract to their

ex-combatant staff after that year.⁵⁰ The reintegration program in Namibia similarly paid for ex-combatants to take up salaried, short-term internships in the private sector – which afforded them the opportunity to gain work experience, while their employer benefited from free labor and the chance to screen potential employees.⁵¹ In North West Somalia (Somaliland), the difficulty of finding placements for ex-combatants in local businesses encouraged one reintegration program to develop a reverse family-based approach aligned with local culture. Business owners identified family members who fulfilled the ex-combatant eligibility criteria for the program and the program entered into individual contracts with interested ex-combatants for on-the-job training. The program paid training fees to the host business against strict proof of training and attendance and provided subsistence allowances to the trainees during their training period. At the end of the period, the project then facilitated the joint signing of a contract of employment between the ex-combatant, the host-business and the Ministry of Labour.

52. Ensuring that employer incentive schemes translate into lasting employment for ex-combatant beneficiaries requires the investment of significant administrative resources.

Program officers must work closely with both ex-combatants and employers to follow-up on existing matches, keep track of new job vacancies, publicize employment opportunities, facilitate applications from ex-combatants, and undertake demand-creation for ex-combatants' abilities. Particular attention may also need to be given to marketing ex-combatants' skills and to fighting the hiring prejudices they may face. In Ethiopia, for instance, the national Commission for the Rehabilitation of Former Members of the Army and Disabled War Veterans promoted employment for ex-combatants by working with former employers to facilitate rehiring and by issuing certificates to attest to skills and experience acquired during military service.⁵²

⁴⁹ Creative Associates International, Inc. (1995), Colletta et al (1996)

⁵⁰ Colletta et al (1996)

⁵¹ World Bank (1993)

⁵² Creative Associates International, Inc. (1995)

C. Social Reintegration Support

Social Reintegration Support ...

- Promotes the reacceptance of ex-combatants and their families into the community
- Addresses psychosocial issues which affect reintegration
- Involves awareness-raising and sensitization of society about ex-combatant reintegration
- Fosters reconciliation and tolerance
- Encourages the development of civilian life skills
- Is a process in which community stakeholders (including traditional authorities, religious associations and community leaders) have an important role

53. **Reintegration into civilian life is predicated upon an ex-combatant finding a place within a family, a community, or a network of social relations.** Support that fosters reconciliation, trust and social harmony between ex-combatants and local communities is thus vital to reintegration. Many ex-combatants maintain strong family ties and standing in their community throughout their military service. Other ex-combatants, however, may have particularly acute need of social reintegration support, including those who: have spent many years away from home; are unable to return to their community of origin; or, those who were part of defeated armed forces or armed groups responsible for atrocities against civilians.

54. **Too often social reintegration support is provided as an afterthought to economic reintegration support.** Yet evidence from past reintegration programs makes clear that social integration is an equally important aspect of the transition to civilian life; it is also often a catalyst, or even a condition, for employment and economic security.⁵³ Social reintegration assistance can range from information and sensitization of ex-combatants, communities and society-at-large through

outreach services and awareness campaigns, support for community traditions and ceremonies of cleansing and reconciliation, provision of counseling and psychosocial support, and strengthening of community services.

COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION

55. **Similar to the orientation support which ex-combatants receive prior to their demobilization, communities benefit from assistance in preparing for the return or arrival of ex-combatants.** This assistance can take multiple forms, from publications, radio messages, and music and drama productions which share information about the overall DDR process, to open public discussions, meetings and orientation workshops. Such activities serve to sensitize community members to reintegration issues prior to the arrival of ex-combatants in the community. Political, religious and ethnic leaders, teachers, health workers, leaders of community associations and other community leaders and opinion-shapers have a particularly important role to play in sensitization efforts and in stimulating community ownership of the peace-building process.

56. **The key messages for community sensitization will vary considerably depending on the social, political and economic context.** Whether ex-combatants are returning as individuals, among groups of ex-combatants, with their families, as heroes or former enemies, as former residents or outsiders will shape community sensitization and preparation strategies. Some key messages around which sensitization efforts could be focused, depending on the context, include: that reintegration of ex-combatants is linked to achieving a sustainable peace; that support to ex-combatants is designed to help them attain a standard of living comparable to that of the rest of the community and will not be provided indefinitely; and that ex-combatants can have valuable skills, goods, services or other resources to contribute to the community.⁵⁴

57. The National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program in the Republic of Congo has planned an original and multi-faceted approach to community sensitization. Information about general

⁵³ Colletta et al (1996), Mehreteab (2002), National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Sierra Leone (undated)

⁵⁴ Creative Associates International, Inc. (1998), World Bank (2002), Ginifer (2003), Body and Brown (2005), National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Sierra Leone (undated)

peace-building and DDR programming and specific ex-combatant reintegration activities will be shared with communities through radio, television, print media, signs and pamphlets – and through direct word-of-mouth tools such as door-to-door visits by program staff, community meetings, theatre performances and cultural and sporting events. A network of *stars-ombrelles* – national music and sports figures – will also be developed to advocate for the program and help to disseminate information about its activities and policies to the general public. In addition to overall public sensitization efforts, a wide range of elected officials and community leaders, including village and district chiefs, municipal counselors, senators and prefects, will take part in regular discussions and meetings on the program and receive ongoing information updates. It is hoped that this ongoing engagement with the program will help local leaders to clarify rumors and miscommunications when they arise, and encourage them to take an active role in reintegration activities within their communities.

RECONCILIATION PROCESSES

58. **Acceptance or reacceptance of an ex-combatant as a member of the community may require ex-combatants to take part in some form of local reconciliation process.** These processes can take varied forms and serve varied purposes. Traditional rites can be used to confer absolution, cleanse past actions or heal past wounds, signifying the end military life and the commencement of civilian life. Where

forgiveness for past bad deeds is the objective, ex-combatants may be called on to publicly admit their role in past conflicts at community gatherings, and to accept the penance or restitution recommended by local leaders. Communities sometimes organize rituals or ceremonies to cleanse and purify the body or the spirit, or to quiet ill spirits associated with the ex-combatant's past actions.⁵⁵ These are often especially valuable parts of the reintegration process for women and children who were forcibly abducted and used as 'bush wives', and have been stigmatized by their sexual assault.⁵⁶ Similarly, rituals and ceremonies, such as those in which clothes or military items are burnt or ex-combatants are formally received back into their community, are also symbolically important in marking the end of life as a combatant and a rebirth or new beginning in the civilian world. The High Commission for the Reinsertion of Ex-Combatants in the Republic of Congo is currently studying some of these traditional mechanisms, and exploring options for reviving and strengthening traditional reconciliation processes as part of the national reintegration program.

59. **Reconciliation is promoted through a myriad of social activities through which ex-combatants and other community members have a chance to interact and rebuild relationships.** Initiatives such as sporting and cultural events and community repair or rehabilitation projects can all be valuable catalysts for building, or rebuilding, relationships and feature prominently in the MDRP. What makes these processes particularly important is that they offer a two-way bridge between ex-combatants and civilian groups. Ex-

Box 9. Promoting Reconciliation in Rwanda

In 2005, the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission surveyed over 575 local administration officials across the country about the social impacts of its activities. Over 96% of respondents reported that ex-combatants in the program had helped to build mutual trust and acceptance within the community by participating in unity and reconciliation-building activities such as Gacaca – the traditional local court system which is being used to publicly acknowledge activities during the genocide, expedite genocide trials and encourage reparation and reconciliation. Ex-combatant participation in activities and events such as public meetings, community works initiatives and local security patrols was also highlighted as having promoted reconciliation and community acceptance.

Source: Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (2005)

⁵⁵ Christian Children's Fund (1998), Verhey (2001), Alden (2003), Schroeder (2005), Specht (undated)

⁵⁶ Verhey (2001)

combatants demonstrate their desire to be accepted back into their communities, while the wider community signifies that it is willing to accept the ex-combatant back without shame or dishonor. Joining local councils, sporting and cultural associations, and religious groups can often further encourage reconciliation and promote successful reintegration by providing psychological and social support mechanisms to replace former military command structures.⁵⁷ Support to such civil society organizations and to other organizations that bring together ex-combatants and the wider community – such as civilian affairs units of armed forces or veteran’s associations with members from different sides of the conflict – can thus be a crucial part of reintegration programming.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

60. **Measures to address the physical and economic needs of ex-combatants form the core of most reintegration programs – yet their psychosocial needs are often overlooked or insufficiently addressed.**⁵⁸ Addressing psychosocial issues has been a consistent challenge across MDRP-supported reintegration programs and is a key area in which greater research and resources are required. Many ex-combatants have been traumatized by their experiences; anxiety, chronic depression, sleep disorders, anger management issues, and substance abuse problems are not uncommon. The screening of ex-combatants for post-traumatic stress disorder and provision of appropriate services should begin during the demobilization process and continue after the ex-combatant’s return to the community – as many symptoms and related problems become more apparent with the passage of time.

61. **Mental health services and support during the reintegration process can take many forms.** Surveys of ex-combatant trauma symptoms and mental health needs during initial socio-economic profile surveys help to determine the specific range of psychosocial services which may be relevant to ex-combatants in a particular area. Some common services provided within reintegration programming include: outreach counselors, organized discussion groups and information-sharing, which strengthen the ability of ex-combatants to identify and cope with sources of stress (from written materials to radio and drama programming to seminars

and workshops). Intensive one-on-one treatment for all ex-combatants is often neither feasible nor appropriate, but an effective alternative is building or strengthening community-based psychosocial support networks which are not limited to ex-combatants, but from which they too can benefit. By training local community leaders (such as teachers and clergy) to provide psychosocial assistance, reintegration programs can make a significant contribution to the general population, particularly in rural and marginalized post-conflict communities where human and financial resources for mental health care are limited.

62. **Ex-combatants who have had particularly traumatic experiences – such as women, child soldiers and the war disabled – may require specialized services.** Recent research from Mozambique, for example, points to the importance of psychosocial interventions in supporting the recovery and reintegration of child soldiers and their evolution into productive spouses, parents, and community members in the decade after their demobilization.⁵⁹ Psychosocial support was similarly cited as one of the three most important elements of child soldier reintegration in El Salvador, along with family reunification and opportunities for education and livelihood.⁶⁰ One innovative model of psychosocial support for child ex-combatants comes from Angola. There, psychosocial assistance was provided through trained, community-based church networks. This approach was a socially-appropriate, low cost and logistically feasible means of providing *in situ* counseling to young people within their families and in keeping with community traditions.⁶¹ Another model comes from North West Somalia (Somaliland), where tailored psychosocial support for traumatized ex-combatants extended beyond mental health services to also include: health and socio-economic assessments, home visits and counselling, home and personnel hygiene training, basic medical treatment, nutritional food cooking and storage demonstration and monitoring, food distribution, and information-sharing meetings.

LIFE SKILLS

63. **Basic life skills can be as important to successful reintegration as the technical skills**

⁵⁷ Creative Associates International, Inc. (1998)

⁵⁸ Comminos et al (2002), Lancaster (2005b)

⁵⁹ Boothby et al (2006)

⁶⁰ Verhey (2001)

⁶¹ Verhey (2001)

required to develop a sustainable livelihood. Distanced from civilian life for months, years and even decades, many ex-combatants, particularly those from irregular forces, are unprepared for the social interactions, business norms and political systems to which they return. As such, several MDRP reintegration programs include specific life skills components, from adult literacy and numeracy activities (including banking, cash management, household financial management), to information-sharing and awareness-raising concerning healthy lifestyles, conflict resolution, and social network building.

64. Civic education is also an important component of life skills programming, and helps ex-combatants to understand their new roles and responsibilities as civilians. Topics covered in such programming generally include the basic “do’s and don’ts” of civilian life, complemented by more specific orientations on legal issues such as the rule of law, formal and indigenous legal systems, human rights, marriage contracts, land rights and property ownership and on political issues such as voting, democracy, representation and community administration.⁶² Information on the rule of law and restrictions on the use of violence should be complemented by specific training on problem-solving, communication and other conflict prevention and dispute resolution skills.

65. Supporting the development of skills which help ex-combatants to build or strengthen relationships is also valuable, as extended social networks can ease the reintegration process. Such support can be as simple as providing ongoing information-sharing and referrals for community services and encouraging ex-combatants and their families to take part in community meetings, church groups, sports clubs, performance troupes, business societies and other community organizations. With support from reintegration program officials, community stakeholders are especially well-suited to taking a lead role in overseeing this component of reintegration programming.

66. Many ex-combatants will also benefit from support in strengthening relationships with immediate family, and particularly in dealing with gender relations and roles. Male and female ex-

combatants may both be unprepared for customary gender norms within the communities into which they reintegrate – which may be more liberal or restrictive than what they have been used to. Local gender traditions stigmatizing women involved in conflict may even discourage some female ex-combatants from claiming the reintegration support for which they are eligible.⁶³ Discussion groups and sensitization activities for ex-combatants and the wider community that focus on issues of household responsibilities, expenditure management and decision-making, observation of traditions and cultural norms, and domestic violence can be valuable reintegration interventions. Such exchanges may furthermore potentially have positive ripple effects on gender and culture issues in the wider community.

II. Designing Effective Reintegration Programming

67. There is no blue-print for reintegration support programs – other than that they respond to the specific needs and opportunities of ex-combatants and to the overall social, political and economic context. Nonetheless, experience from DDR programs around the world provides numerous best practices from which current and future programs can draw. Many of these options and strategies have already been discussed above in connection with the particular programmatic components to which they relate. However, as this section explores in greater detail, there are also overarching lessons for the design of reintegration programs and institutions, and the implementation of reintegration support.

A. Best Practices in Program Design

Allocate attention and dedicated resources to reintegration programming from the start of the DDR process

68. The urgency of disarmament and demobilization processes often results in delays to reintegration components. Immediate post-conflict

⁶² Dworken et al (1997), Arthy (2003), National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Sierra Leone (undated)

⁶³ Barth (2002)

concerns, such as establishing oversight institutions and systems, addressing uncertainties in the political process, organizing disarmament and weapons disposal, and registering combatants and managing demobilization camps often consume the time, energy and resources of staff. In Sierra Leone, for example, the heavy initial demands of disarmament and demobilization, and the implicit belief that reintegration could be addressed at a later date, meant that more than one year passed between the end of demobilization and the availability of economic reintegration support for many ex-combatants.⁶⁴ Several MDRP-supported programs have also experienced similar delays related to capacity constraints, difficulties locating and contracting appropriate partners, uncertainty over beneficiary numbers and profiles, political delays and problems with security.

69. The timely launch and implementation of reintegration activities limit the risk of reintegration programs losing credibility, having low beneficiary

participation and contributing to insecurity. Even before ex-combatants enter into the DDR process, the basic institutional and operational processes necessary to administer reintegration programming should be put in place, including: recruitment, training and deployment of staff; socio-economic profiling of combatants and communities; procurement and financial management procedures and; identifying potential implementing partners for reintegration program sub-components, as highlighted in greater detail in Box 10. In addition, work plans tied to feasible time schedules and, perhaps most importantly, a dedicated medium-term resource-base for reintegration should also be developed. Close collaboration and regular communication between the staffs of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs are also essential to promote a common vision and understanding of the mission at hand, ensure communally-beneficial objectives and structures, develop harmonious time schedules and minimize overlap and repetition of activities.

Box 10. Early Preparation for Reintegration Programming

There are a range of specific tasks that can be undertaken during the disarmament and demobilization phases of a DDR process to prepare for the provision of effective reintegration support:

- Identify and qualify implementation partners through an expression of interest process
- Establish a menu of options of reintegration support activities, with technical specifications and estimated unit costs
- Recruit and contract with eligible partners based on estimated numbers of beneficiaries
- Carry out initial procurement of key inputs (e.g. employment-related tool kits)
- Develop operational guidelines and manuals for reintegration activities

Developing and implementing small reintegration pilot projects is an additional way in which reintegration programming can begin in parallel with disarmament and demobilization phases. Pilot projects can be particularly useful to:

- Fine-tune administrative arrangements and program design
- Build staff and beneficiary confidence in program design and activities
- Build the capacity of program staff
- Develop region-specific options
- Identify vulnerable sub-groups of ex-combatants in need of targeted support
- Assess the capacity of implementing partners
- Refine estimates of the proportion of ex-combatants interested in each reintegration option

70. **Establishing separate agencies to promote the parallel development of demobilization and reintegration aspects of DDR programming has been suggested as a possible approach – but has numerous disadvantages.**⁶⁵ Proponents suggest that this approach could reduce some delays and asymmetries of funding and attention, while strengthening linkages with wider community development programs. However, in practice, this approach carries a very severe risk of creating a disconnect between reintegration support and the disarmament and demobilization processes. With different agencies involved, conflicting messages and methodologies may be invoked, and conflicts over funding and legitimacy can arise more easily, threatening working relationships between the two agencies. Without a dedicated agency to which to turn for assistance, ex-combatants can furthermore be lost in the shuffle. Instead, the experience of the MDRP has been that creating separate departments with dedicated staff, resources and decision-making power within a single DDR agency is a better alternative than separate agencies. This model allows for a responsive reintegration program, while eliminating the risks of inter-agency conflict.

Ensure that programs undertake regular communication and outreach with all stakeholders

71. **For ex-combatants to benefit fully from reintegration programs – no matter how well thought-out or innovative – they must first have adequate knowledge about these programs.** Too often, however, communication with ex-combatants about reintegration support lacks adequate planning and resources. This gap negatively affects access, equity, relevance and quality of services. At a minimum, reintegration programs should ensure regular communication with ex-combatants about: program processes and procedures (including the services offered by local program officers and the criteria on which grant-making decisions are made); changes to promised programming (such as delays or alternative modes of service delivery); and, wider services available to ex-combatants as members of the community (including state- and NGO-run projects dealing with issues such as health, education, employment and poverty-alleviation).⁶⁶ Direct communication with ex-

combatants is particularly essential in the early post-demobilization period, when military commanders may attempt to use information to maintain command and control structures and exert influence over reintegration opportunities and resources.

72. One of the key lessons from the MDRP-supported reintegration program in the Central African Republic to date has been that beneficiaries need regular and accurate communicating. There, the lack of comprehensive information campaigns targeting all ex-combatants and clearly communicating timelines, and the difficulty of finding a reliable means to communicate with ex-combatants after they were declared eligible for reintegration support and chose a reintegration project, all contributed at times to misunderstandings, rumors and frustrations. In some cases situations even escalated to unrest among ex-combatants. This experience highlights the importance of involving local program committees, implementing partners, and community and religious leaders. These actors could have been utilized to convey program information to beneficiaries who lacked access to radio, newspapers and other media outlets. It also stresses the importance of developing two-way communication channels which provide opportunities for ex-combatants to offer regular and confidential feedback to reintegration program personnel.

73. **In addition to regular communication with ex-combatants, there is a clear need for reintegration programs to target information on reintegration support to the wider community.** This communication should include timely explanations of the overall rationale for targeted support to ex-combatants and its connection to peace-building. It should in addition provide descriptions of program elements and publicize activities that provide opportunities for interface between community members and reintegration program personnel. The importance of the regular communication of program activities and objectives to the larger community is underlined by the case of Mozambique. There, ex-combatants perceived their reintegration to have progressed far, while wider community representatives perceived ex-combatant reintegration to have been much less successful.⁶⁷ This case also highlights the importance of including community input into program design, modification and evaluation.

⁶⁵ Arthy (2003)

⁶⁶ Colletta et al (1996), Comminos et al (2002), Body and Brown (2005)

⁶⁷ Alden (2003)

74. The specific means chosen to share information about reintegration should be appropriate to the local context. Radio, for example, is a particularly potent tool for reaching illiterate populations or remote areas where televisions are few.⁶⁸ In the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program communication with ex-combatants and the wider community includes multiple interventions through several media, from regular weekly radio programs to ad hoc television advertisements, documentaries and talk shows to provincial information and sensitization tours.⁶⁹ Civil society groups can also be important conduits for information and outreach about reintegration programs. Whatever the chosen means of information sharing, regular monitoring of the impact of communication strategies should be undertaken through beneficiary and community surveys and other methods. This will help ensure that a communications campaign is effective in using the appropriate message and reaching target audiences.

Encourage the active participation of ex-combatants and communities in reintegration programming

75. **Creating opportunities for both ex-combatants and communities to influence the design, implementation and evaluation of reintegration activities should be a guiding principle of reintegration programming.** Too often ex-combatants are limited to the role of beneficiaries, and communities to the role of onlookers. A study of demobilization and reintegration exercises in Eritrea, for example, found little scope for ex-combatant and community influence and concluded that the program missed out on the opportunity to further its objectives of promoting self-help among ex-combatants and building on community coping strategies.⁷⁰ Actively involving ex-combatants is the best means of accurately identifying and adequately responding to their needs. And as ex-combatant reintegration entails community acceptance, including community representatives in planning reintegration programming is also desirable to ensure that it will expand opportunities for communities as a whole, and that the arrival of ex-combatants is not perceived as reducing or compromising the opportunities available to other community members.⁷¹

76. The participation of ex-combatants, local authorities and communities is not only important for the successful design and implementation of

reintegration programs, but also for their sustainability. Joint ex-combatant and community participation around reintegration program issues fosters the dialogue and social networks upon which much of reintegration depends. Involving community leaders in identifying local service needs or traditional skills of value to the community can also support the development of locally-relevant ex-combatant skills development and employment creation programs. As but one example, community participation in program design could help to identify marginalized communities where ex-combatants trained to provide basic health services such as information on reproductive health or HIV/AIDS prevention could make a valuable local contribution.⁷²

77. Participation can take many forms and does not need to be overly formal or centralized. It can be fostered at district and local levels, with individuals as well as groups and through a mix of both official structures (such as representation on planning committees) and informal opportunities (such as focus groups to develop or evaluate activities). What is essential is that opportunities for participation are created, publicized, monitored and adapted – at all stages of reintegration programming. Capacity-building exercises at the community-level, which cover such topics as promoting and moderating discussions, information-gathering, joint learning, transparency and public speaking can all help to foster broader participation by ex-combatants and communities in reintegration programming – as well as wider community-level development.

Focus particular attention on meeting the reintegration needs of vulnerable groups

78. **Ex-combatants do not have homogeneous reintegration support needs.** Vulnerable sub-groups of ex-combatants have particularly diverse reintegration needs. They may face distinct challenges with regard to access, relevance and comprehensiveness of services. Among the most common vulnerable groups of ex-combatants are: children and youth, women, and the disabled and chronically ill (including HIV-positive ex-combatants). Certain ex-combatants may also face higher levels of economic vulnerability as compared to their peers. The MDRP-supported program in Rwanda for example, has developed a series of criteria

⁶⁸ Arthy (2003)

⁶⁹ MDRP (2004b)

⁷⁰ Mehreteab (2002)

⁷¹ Creative Associates International, Inc. (1996)

⁷² Carballo et al (2000)

including access to land and shelter, levels of household employment and poverty, and health status which it uses to channel additional financial support to economically vulnerable ex-combatants.⁷³ Programs should also be prepared to recognize the diverse needs of individuals *within* vulnerable sub-groups. Services to former child soldiers, for example, must assist not only dependent children, but also take into account older adolescents and young adults, who may be married or have dependents of their own, and thus have very different adult concerns and needs.⁷⁴

79. Processes and procedures for accessing reintegration support may also require adaptation for vulnerable groups. Such modifications could include deploying program officers directly to the community for assessments, distribution of benefits or follow-up. This adaptation is particularly beneficial for vulnerable ex-combatants for whom a trip to a district or provincial office is prohibitive, such as for female ex-combatants caring for children, disabled ex-combatants and poor ex-combatants unable to afford the cost of transport. Similarly, the distribution of information and materials about the rights of vulnerable ex-combatants and the services available to them can promote a more active role for vulnerable ex-combatants in advocating for their own needs. Including representative associations in the planning of specialized assistance can also promote a holistic approach to vulnerability support.

80. In many cases, promoting access to mainstream assistance will be more effective in meeting the needs of vulnerable groups than developing specialized activities. This approach requires an inclusive and transparent process of defining vulnerable target groups, an *ex-ante* strategy for reaching

the vulnerable and an adequate system for evaluating the eligibility of ex-combatants for specialized assistance. Care must also be taken to ensure that targeted interventions do not further stigmatize or marginalize vulnerable ex-combatants. At the institutional level, reintegration programs should include gender, child, disability and poverty expertise among staff, and all staff members should receive orientation and training on serving vulnerable beneficiaries.⁷⁵ Additional stakeholders beyond reintegration staff may also need to be incorporated. Medical professionals, for example, may be needed to assess the condition and level of vulnerability of chronically ill and disabled ex-combatants.

81. For disabled ex-combatants, a balance between two approaches appears to be most effective in ensuring sustainable support. First, to the extent possible, moderately disabled ex-combatants (who make up the majority of disabled beneficiaries) should be “mainstreamed” into normal reintegration programs. This ensures improved coverage of this group, since there are many more agencies working in reintegration than working exclusively with the disabled. It also promotes social reintegration by assisting the disabled alongside the non-disabled. This mainstreaming usually requires small adaptations to programming, such as modified tools to be used by amputees in vocational training. The second approach, aimed at the more severely disabled, entails working through existing national structures and agencies that manage disabled support for the general population. With this approach, the services delivered are more technically competent and sustainable for severely disabled ex-combatants who require ongoing medical attention and follow-up.

Box 11. MDRP Partners in Reintegration Programming have included

- Ex-combatants
- Community-based organizations
- Local authorities
- Business Sector
- Central government: ministries, parliament
- United Nations and other multilateral agencies
- Donor agencies
- Families of ex-combatants
- Local opinion-shapers
- Health and medical professionals
- Armed Forces
- Local and international NGOs
- Media

⁷³ MDRP (2004b)

⁷⁴ Ginifer (2003), Lancaster (2005b)

⁷⁵ Barth (2002), Ginifer (2003), Tesfamichael et al (2004)

DEVELOP BROAD-BASED PARTNERSHIPS IN SUPPORT OF REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMING

82. **Partnerships with local stakeholders strengthen the effectiveness of reintegration programs in the short-term and create synergies which promote longer-term community development.** The various national reintegration programs supported by the MDRP have benefited from a wide range of partners, from ex-combatants themselves, to local community organizations, to international NGOs and donor agencies, as illustrated in Box 11. Different partners can support different aspects of

programming – whether related to content development, implementation, financing or communication – and the choice of which organizations to work with will depend largely on their approach, motivation, experience and capacities. However, attention should be paid to minimizing competition between different partners to promote fruitful collaboration and coordination of their respective activities.

83. Partners can also be valuable sources of local knowledge, help to shoulder the administrative or financial burden of programs, directly lead reintegration support activities or deliver specialized reintegration support services, as is further discussed in Box 12.

Box 12. Subcontracting Reintegration Support

The majority of MDRP reintegration programs contract with specialist partners to deliver certain components of reintegration assistance. This strategy has been promoted as a means of capitalizing on the expertise of individual agencies in particular aspects of reintegration programming, of enabling program activities to be launched quickly, and of creating an environment for national program staff to learn from more experienced partners. The pros and cons of using partner agencies to run reintegration activities include:

Benefits:

- Acquiring of missing technical and administrative capacity
- Leveraging of parallel resources which partners are already investing in ex-combatants or communities in general
- Avoidance of the creation of parallel structures (e.g. vocational training institute specifically for ex-combatants)

Drawbacks:

- Bypassing of the agencies which will have responsibility for related activities in the long-term (e.g. government line ministries) can undermine local capacity-building
- Higher unit costs (particularly for international partners)
- Less operational flexibility (e.g. many international agencies are subject to security protocols which could restrict their movement or require them to shut-down in certain situations)

What can be done in the absence of suitable partners?

In many post-conflict settings, it may not be possible to find a partner organization with sufficient capacity and relevant experience. Strategies adopted by MDRP-supported programs in such environments include:

- Creating a strong decentralized network of local program offices and program officers
- Supporting the development of community organizations through capacity-building around participation
- Using existing elected local administrations to assume tasks such as supervision and monitoring of local reintegration activities

Building strong partnerships helps to reinforce links between ex-combatant reintegration activities, assistance provided to other war-affected populations and parallel community development and peace-building initiatives, thus furthering social reintegration efforts.⁷⁶

84. **Perhaps most importantly, partnerships can build capacity among local stakeholders to carry on related activities beyond the life of a reintegration program.** A review of the Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Program, for example, found that, beyond its immediate objectives, the program had also contributed to strengthening the capacity of the local and international NGOs it had partnered with to implement reintegration activities.⁷⁷ The review particularly highlighted the impact of the program in encouraging NGOs to begin to shift from emergency operations towards ongoing development projects and to strengthen their administration, fiscal management and accountability – benefits which will endure beyond the life of the program itself. Investing in the capacity of partner organizations is a particularly acute requirement in regions where basic infrastructure and community structures were destroyed by conflict, where community-based organizations are young or few, and where little structured, funded development activity has previously taken place. The Angola experience suggests several areas on which initial capacity-building support to partners could focus, including: financial management, procurement, administration, reporting procedures and communication strategies.⁷⁸

B. Best Practices in institutional Arrangements

85. This paper has so far focused on best practices and strategies to maximize the effectiveness of reintegration support. It now will attempt to outline the structural aspects that contribute to effective management of DDR operations. The design of the institutional structures responsible for DDR has a profound effect on how well programming serves beneficiaries. Every reintegration program should therefore be located within institutional structures adapted to the particular organizational and governance landscape within which it will be placed. Whatever

the specific form, experiences of both successful and unsuccessful reintegration programs suggest that there are six common features that should be present in the institutional structure of any reintegration program:

- National leadership
- A clear institutional structure and collaborative framework
- Mechanisms of decentralization
- Systems of information management, monitoring and evaluation
- Financial systems and controls
- An exit strategy

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

86. **With their political links to peace processes and, often, to security sector reform, DDR operations are of national importance and require national leadership.** This leadership can take the form of: strong national political will and commitment; ability to create the necessary legal or institutional frameworks to facilitate reintegration; and active involvement of relevant national leaders in program development and in ensuring the tailoring of programming to country requirements.⁷⁹ All of these activities include a role for government. Alongside national and sub-national government officials, active involvement should be sought from relevant leaders in the armed forces, NGOs, the health profession, the business community – in short, the array of other sectors and civil society organizations with expertise in issues related to ex-combatant reintegration. Leadership does not imply centralized control, however; once national actors have set program parameters and objectives, their role can be one of managing other specialist national and international organizations to achieve them.

87. **The resource base for reintegration programming can be similarly mixed between national and international sources, but should involve the investment of some national financial resources.** This encourages national ownership, giving citizens and leaders a financial stake in program results. In Ethiopia, for example, the national leadership of the demobilization and reintegration program was deemed to have been a major contributor to its success. This case is examined in greater detail in Appendix E.

⁷⁶ MDRP (2004c)

⁷⁷ Creative Associates International, Inc. (2006)

⁷⁸ Creative Associates International, Inc. (2006)

⁷⁹ MDRP (undated)

CLEAR INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE AND COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

88. **The precise institutional structure of a reintegration program should be a function of individual country or sub-regional contexts.** The national programs supported by the MDRP have each held to this principle, developing a structure appropriate to their particular legal-political system. Irrespective of country-specific adaptations, there are also three institutional elements that are present in some form in all programs, namely: (i) a program coordination and oversight body; (ii) a program implementation body and; (iii) implementing partners.⁸⁰ The precise size, configuration and interactions between these groups vary across countries, but their presence represents a useful guideline for developing a clear institutional structure for managing reintegration programming.

89. *(i) A coordinating body* – This unit should be located at the highest level of government, with participation from key national stakeholders and program partners. However, it should be as politically inclusive and neutral as possible. This is crucial so that the body can maintain its legitimacy, even in the event that political commitments are broken or delayed.⁸¹ The coordinating body will usually be responsible for developing the national reintegration (and overall DDR) strategy and related policies, and guiding and overseeing program progress, though it is generally not directly involved in implementation. All key reintegration stakeholders should be represented so that the coordinating body can make decisions on technical specifications for programming, ensure the coordination of different programs with independent funding sources, and identify opportunities to adapt programming to efficiently cover any gaps or respond to emerging lessons.

90. *(ii) A program implementation unit*⁸² – This unit should report to the coordinating body. Its areas of responsibility include program design, coordination and management of program implementation, procurement and financial management, contracting of implementing partners, and monitoring and evaluation. This unit will employ technical specialists with sectoral specialties (such as vocational training, agriculture, psychosocial issues, vulnerable groups), as well as

skills in communication, financial management, information management, procurement, and monitoring and evaluation. The unit should be locally represented through field offices that bring the program closer to the beneficiaries.

91. *(iii) Implementing partners* – Partners are agencies with experience and capacity in implementing reintegration-related activities. They are contracted to execute individual reintegration activities under the management and coordination of the program implementation unit, to which they report. Partners can include government entities, civil society and private sector organizations, international organizations, local and international NGOs and community organizations, and should be selected through a transparent bidding process.

DECENTRALIZATION

92. **Decentralized program structures are essential to ensuring beneficiary access, optimizing program flexibility and exploiting emerging local opportunities.** There are multiple methods of decentralization, the most common being the creation of a network of provincial or regional offices. For greater sub-regional coverage, these offices can be complemented by program outreach officers or mobile centers able to visit the rural or remote areas in which many ex-combatants reside. A wide network of decentralized offices has been prioritized throughout the national programs in MDRP countries, as illustrated in Table 2. These networks have helped ex-combatants to access their entitlements without incurring large time or transport costs. Easier local access has also promoted security and social reintegration by reducing the impetus for ex-combatants to relocate to urban centers in order to receive program support.⁸³ Moreover, the decentralized model also promotes the involvement of local staff, whose knowledge of local languages, customs, authorities and institutions can build strong local level partnerships and networks.

⁸⁰ MDRP (undated)

⁸¹ Creative Associates International, Inc. (1997)

⁸² Mehreteab (2002), MDRP (2004b), Creative Associates International, Inc. (2006), National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Sierra Leone (undated)

⁸³ Alden (2003), Batista (2004)

Table 2. Decentralization in the MDRP

Program Country	Number of Program Offices Country-Wide	Number of Program Offices Outside Capital City	Percentage of Program Offices Outside Capital city
Angola	19	17	89%
Burundi	11	9	82%
Central African Republic	4	3	75%
Democratic Republic of Congo	21	19	90%
Republic of Congo	7	6	86%
Rwanda	31	30	97%
Uganda	6	5	83%

93. **Decentralized program offices have multiple roles to play in reintegration programming, from information sharing, to direct service delivery, to monitoring and oversight.** In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, the decentralized provincial and community offices of the national demobilization and reintegration program have been tasked with six major functions: (i) disseminating information on, and raising awareness of, reintegration programming to ex-combatants, communities of return, local administration officials, NGOs, community associations and private enterprises; (ii) maintaining a database of local training and employment opportunities for ex-combatants (by both region and sector); (iii) identifying and supporting local implementing partners to develop and manage reintegration activities; (iv) identifying opportunities for collaboration between the reintegration program and local programs and activities; (v) providing direct psychosocial support to ex-combatants; and (vi) monitoring reinsertion payments.⁸⁴ These offices also play an ongoing role in data-gathering, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of program activities. Successful decentralization of reintegration programming requires the investment of sufficient financial and human resources, in order to ensure high-quality, regular and equitable services across regions.

SOLID SYSTEMS FOR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION

94. **Accurate and timely information is the foundation on which reintegration program**

development, improvement and evolution depends; establishing information management systems at the start of programming will promote the gathering of data comparable across regions and years. Among the first tasks of national leaders preparing reintegration programming should be preparatory data gathering activities, including socio-economic profiles and baseline surveys of ex-combatants and community members, studies on economic opportunities in communities of resettlement, and needs assessments for special target groups.⁸⁵ Once programming has been developed, ongoing data collection and solid national information systems are crucial to preventing duplication of benefits for ex-combatants. Such monitoring also facilitates overall mid-course corrections and improvements in program activities, and the identification of specific regions or vulnerable groups in need of additional support.

95. **A confidential beneficiary database is a crucial component of data management for the MDRP.** Primarily established to facilitate the demobilization process, these databases can also serve to improve data management, and monitoring and evaluation of reintegration programs. The beneficiary database which has been established in Burundi, for example, allows program staff to track all the reintegration benefits received by an individual, including reinsertion payments, educational benefits and follow-up visits by program staff. The database also provides a basis for analyzing trends across beneficiary groups, whether by region, type of economic reintegration activities or

⁸⁴ CONADER (2005)

⁸⁵ MDRP (undated)

service provider. This can aid in trouble-shooting by revealing lags or weaknesses in partner implementation, or calling attention to services that ex-combatants are either unable or unwilling to access. Databases can also be valuable tools in assessing program impact, producing periodic statistical reports and generating random beneficiary lists for in-depth follow-up.

96. Assessing the impact of reintegration programs requires sustained and extensive monitoring and evaluation. A broad-based approach to relevant indicators and variables – such that outcomes are monitored in addition to inputs and outputs – is encouraged. This is particularly relevant in cases where

the actual number of beneficiaries differs from that estimated at the start of the DDR process, and quantitative measures of outputs may not provide a robust measure of program performance. It is thus essential to move beyond narrowly focused quantitative data collection to include qualitative data, social analyses, beneficiary assessments and compilations of lessons learned. Box 13 highlights some tools and strategies for monitoring and evaluation of reintegration projects. Community stakeholders such as local administrations, ex-combatant associations and NGOs can all play an important role in monitoring and evaluating reintegration support at local levels.

Box 13. Monitoring and Evaluating Reintegration Programming

In reintegration programs, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are fundamental means to ensuring the quality and timeliness of assistance to ex-combatants. To develop an effective monitoring and evaluation strategy for each of its programs, the MDRP first begins by undertaking a strategic planning exercise that outlines what each program is supposed to achieve. Indicators are then designed that will measure project progress towards these specific objectives. These indicators are in turn monitored at regular intervals using a range of tools and strategies. Among MDRP-supported programs, these commonly include:

- *A Management Information System (MIS).* The MIS tracks statistical data on beneficiaries and is a crucial tool in helping to monitor implementation progress, as well as to avoid duplication of assistance to beneficiaries. Ideally, the MIS should be put in place at the beginning of project implementation, to facilitate real-time data capture on programs and improve service delivery.
- *Quantitative and qualitative data gathering.* To assess program impact, independent evaluations and assessments (which include surveys, focus group interviews, key informant interviews and/or participant observations) are carried out on an annual basis to monitor implementation progress and evaluate program successes and shortcomings.
- *Beneficiary and stakeholder involvement.* The emphasis of reintegration programs on multi-sectoral approaches and multiple implementation channels requires a strong focus on undertaking M&E at the community level. In many post-conflict contexts, difficulties of regular access to rural and marginalized areas for M&E teams similarly necessitate the active participation of community networks in monitoring and evaluating activities. Stakeholder involvement at local levels can thus be an important complement and supplement to the M&E efforts of implementing agencies and reintegration program management.
- *Mid-term reviews.* In addition to regular oversight of implementation progress, each national program is also required to carry out a Mid-term Review at the chronological midpoint of its reintegration program. The review is a strategic assessment of external and internal factors influencing the achievement of project objectives, and of work still outstanding to reach those objectives within the implementation time-frame. The mid-term review also reconsiders the appropriateness and relevance of original program objectives in light of the current program context, and is thus an essential management tool for making mid-course adjustments to improve project implementation and impact.

APPROPRIATE FINANCIAL SYSTEMS AND CONTROLS

97. **Typical DDR programs, and reintegration components in particular, are costly undertakings which often involve high levels of international financing, myriad urgent transactions and direct cash payments to beneficiaries.** Generally, however, the institutional environments in which these programs work lack strong and consistent financial controls and the risk of financial leakage is often high. This can undermine the confidence of program donors, partners, and, perhaps most importantly, of the parties to the peace agreement guiding the DDR process. In the former case, a loss of confidence can threaten the financial support for the program and its effective implementation. In the latter case, lack of faith in the DDR process can lead to security risks and threaten the overall peace process.

98. **To ensure appropriate financial management standards and controls, many DDR operations engage recognized public accounting firms and/or project management services.** Although relatively expensive (comprising up to 5% of the overall program value), this approach can warrant the costs – reducing potential losses, maintaining overall confidence and strengthening procurement and audit functions within the program. These external firms should be held accountable for the performance of their personnel and oversee their work to ensure that they uphold the relevant donor and/or international standards for financial management. Financial reporting by the chosen firm should be provided to the government and donor partners of the program.

EXIT STRATEGY

99. **While reintegration is an ongoing process for ex-combatants and their families, the institutional structure tasked with providing reintegration assistance should itself have a limited life-span.** Ensuring time limitations on reintegration support is a key MDRP principle – a means to reduce the likelihood of creating dependency among beneficiaries, and to promote the inclusion of interested ex-combatants within wider development initiatives.⁸⁶ As such, the

extent and duration of assistance to ex-combatants needs to be clear and transparent from the start of programming. A plan for ensuring the necessary follow-up to reintegration activities should also be developed prior to the close of formal programming. Enacting this plan will require early and ongoing efforts by reintegration programs to build and maintain strong linkages with local development initiatives and actors.

100. **Government line ministries (such as those in social welfare, education and health) will have an important role in providing wider reintegration support beyond DDR programs,** targeting ex-combatants in need alongside other vulnerable members of the community. Many civil society actors, including NGOs, religious groups, research institutes, think-tanks and media organizations will also be well-suited to incorporating issues and activities related to ex-combatant reintegration into their services for other war-affected populations or their more general development activities. The effectiveness of such transitions can be enhanced through close collaboration between program staff and these entities throughout the duration of reintegration programming. This will ensure a more efficient handover of follow-up activities, such as beneficiary tracking and monitoring and evaluation, upon the closing of reintegration programs. These organizations will also provide a contact point for the ongoing concerns of ex-combatants through their mainstream work in community development, peace-building, land claims and security sector reform.⁸⁷

101. One example of the process involved in developing an exit strategy comes from the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Program. Two years before its planned close, it has already begun developing an exit plan to guide its activities leading up to the program's end. The RDRP's first step has been to assess the current state and impact of its activities through tracer surveys of ex-combatants, impact assessments for vulnerable beneficiaries, a study of community dynamics, social and environmental assessments, and an impact assessment of its sensitization program. It has also convened meetings with provincial and district administrators, civil society and private sector representatives and wider community members. Based on these activities, the program has identified four priorities on which, while still continuing

⁸⁶ World Bank (2002)

⁸⁷ Dworken et al (1997)

its demobilization and reintegration activities, the RDRP will focus its attention. These four elements are: (i) strengthening the capacity of associations and cooperatives in which ex-combatants and civilians jointly participate; (ii) strengthening the capacity of outreach and referral systems in the country in order to help ex-combatants to access support through mainstream channels; (iii) promoting enhanced self-sufficiency among economically vulnerable ex-combatants through education, vocational training and apprenticeships; and, (iv) enhancing the capacity of district administrative institutions to address issues related to ex-combatant reintegration. The identification and strengthening of relevant partners to whom specific responsibilities for ex-combatant support can be devolved is the key task for the RDRP to achieve each of these elements and is the foundation of their exit strategy.

Part 3: Conclusions and Lessons for the MDRP

102. Over 140,000 ex-combatants in seven countries have received direct reintegration assistance through MDRP-supported programs since 2002. Each program has begun to yield valuable lessons about effective strategies for assisting ex-combatants in their reintegration process – as well as for navigating many of the obstacles and challenges inherent to the process. With none of the national programs supported by the MDRP yet having concluded, each still has room to learn, to reflect and to improve its reintegration activities. Moreover, for programs which were only recently

launched, good practices gathered from the MDRP and from DDR programs around the world will serve to guide program planning and development. Box 14, for example, highlights some key early design considerations for new and future reintegration programs.

103. **Three guiding principles encapsulate the main operational lessons identified in this paper.** It is hoped that these principles will serve the MDRP and other DDR policy-makers, practitioners and donors to conceptualize reintegration support in the future.

Box 14. Some Questions to Consider when Designing Reintegration Support for Ex-Combatants

- How is reintegration defined and how will it be measured?
- What are the reintegration needs and expectations of ex-combatants?
- What opportunities exist for promoting reintegration (e.g. market demands, civil service staffing, complementary development programming)?
- What are the key constraints to promoting reintegration (e.g. land, credit, skills, institutional capacity)?
- What socio-economic data and preparatory studies are required to guide the development and implementation of programming?
- How can programming coordinate with and leverage the activities of partners and programs on social and economic development, social services delivery and peace-building?
- What mechanisms to deliver reintegration assistance are appropriate and feasible?
- What institution will be responsible for managing reintegration programming?
- How will participation and ownership by key stakeholders be promoted?
- How will the needs of vulnerable groups of ex-combatants be addressed?
- How will information on the program be shared with ex-combatants and local populations?
- What will be required to effectively monitor and evaluate the program and ensure that the program is able to adapt to ongoing feedback?
- How will measures for recruitment prevention and monitoring of re-recruitment be included?
- What is the exit strategy for the program?

Sources: Tesfamichael et al (2004), Schroeder (2005)

PRINCIPLE 1:

Foster reconciliation between ex-combatants and civilians in their communities of settlement

- Help ex-combatants to attain the general standard of living of those in their community
- Limit the duration of support to reduce disparities in the community and discourage dependency
- Provide support in a manner that benefits the wider community of return wherever possible
- Build on existing local capacities and institutions rather than creating new structures
- Promote assistance that demonstrates and incorporates civilian norms of behavior
- Minimize market distortions in local economies

PRINCIPLE 2:

Offer assistance which leads to sustainable livelihoods for ex-combatants

- Use socio-economic profiles to adapt support to ex-combatants' specific needs, preferences, assets, experiences and skills
- Align program offerings with economic opportunity structures found in the region and in communities of settlement
- Maximize opportunities for beneficiary choice among program support options
- Refer ex-combatants to relevant opportunities provided by parallel or complementary relief and development programs or national services

PRINCIPLE 3:

Build the capacity of national structures and institutions through reintegration support

- Involve government, national leaders and civil society in setting reintegration program parameters
- Strengthen the management capacity of program partners by building skills in communication, financial and administrative oversight, information and data management, and monitoring and evaluation
- Support decentralized program structures which incorporate local leaders, networks and organizations
- Adopt an exit strategy that logically and systematically transitions program functions to national stakeholders

104. As the programs of the MDRP continue to grow and begin to reach their conclusion, more comprehensive analyses of their successes and shortcomings with reintegration will be undertaken. Their results will enhance and supplement the principles and the lessons identified here, providing greater guidance for the international community on effective strategies for supporting ex-combatant reintegration in a variety of social, economic and political contexts.

Part IV: Appendices

Reader's note: One might wonder why, at the end of a document examining lessons in reintegration learned by the MDRP, the appendices contain only cases from outside the MDRP. The answer is simply that the MDRP is still in progress. As none of the MDRP-supported national reintegration programs have concluded, it is not yet possible to undertake an ex-post reflection on the outcomes and impacts of the MDRP's approach to reintegration. To draw from the wisdom of completed reintegration programs, these appendices thus explore assistance provided to ex-combatants outside of the realm of the MDRP – highlighting different aspects of reintegration programming in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mozambique, Namibia and Ethiopia during the 1990s. The lessons from these projects continue to be relevant today for the MDRP and our partner governments, donors and civil society organizations.

Appendix A: Reinsertion Entitlements in Nicaragua

In 1990, the United States Agency for International Development provided a grant to the Organization of American States to support the resettlement of former Nicaraguan Resistance combatants and their immediate families. Over fourteen months, for a cost of approximately US\$100 per person, food, clothing, basic tools and kitchenware were provided to over 100,000 beneficiaries. Beneficiaries included demobilized members of the Nicaraguan resistance, as well as their dependent parents, grandparents, spouses, children, siblings under the age of 16 and grandchildren under the age of 16. While the distribution of reinsertion benefits can pose an administrative and logistic challenge, the Nicaraguan case illustrates several policies and procedures which can help to ensure efficient distribution of entitlements.

THE ENTITLEMENT PACKAGE:

- *Food items:* beans; rice; cooking oil; corn flour; salt; sugar; corn drink powder and powdered milk for pregnant women and children under the age of 7. (Distributed monthly for six months, starting 30 days after demobilization.)
- *Clothing and hygiene articles:* Shirt; pants; dress; underwear; brassier; socks and boots. One toothbrush per person and two soap bars and a tube of tooth paste per family. Clothing articles were distributed according to beneficiaries' sex and age. (One time only.)
- *Roofing material and basic tools:* Zinc sheets and nails. The number of sheets received depended on beneficiaries' marital status. Married beneficiaries received extra sheets. Tools for urban dwellers: machete, sharpening

file, hammer and saw. Tools for rural dwellers: machete, sharpening file, hoe and axe. (One time only.)

- *Kitchenware:* Per person: spoon; plastic cup and plate. Per family: cooking pot; mill; bucket; pitcher and serving spoon. (One time only.)

START-UP REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROGRAM:

- Roster of eligible beneficiaries (names, geographical location, number of dependents).
- Demobilization identification cards issued and delivered to beneficiaries.
- Management, monitoring and audit procedures in place for procurement, storage, transportation and distribution of goods.
- Administration forms in place (eg. for shipment control, beneficiary receipts, etc.).
- Warehouses and distribution centers identified and contracted.
- Knowledge and understanding of local transport system.

LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF PACKAGES:

Warehouses

14 warehouses were established to receive and store products. The number of regional and sub-regional distribution warehouses was chosen according to demographics, as well as geographical and security considerations. Warehouses were clearly identified by program banners and flags.

- *Managua warehouse:* Since all purchases were handled by the program office in Managua, all products were delivered to, and stored in, a warehouse in Managua. Due to a shortage of products in Nicaragua at the time, a number of products had to be imported.
- *Main Regional warehouses:* Products were shipped from Managua to six regional warehouses for storage and distribution to sub-regional distribution warehouses.

- *Sub-regional Distribution Warehouses:* Products were shipped from regional warehouses to seven sub-regional warehouses according to the needs of the distribution centers.

Distribution Centers

Initially 49 distribution centers were set up for beneficiaries to receive their entitlements. By July 1991, the number had increased to 230 to accommodate new beneficiaries and reduce the distance that beneficiaries had to travel to pick up their rations. Where possible, mayor's offices and community centers were used as distribution centers free of charge and office space was rented to accommodate distribution sites in other locations.

Transportation System

Products were transported between warehouses by trucks rented for each individual shipment. Small shipments were transported by the program's own vehicles. All shipments between warehouses and to distribution centers were accompanied by a "Shipment Control Form" which allowed central and regional administration systems to keep track of shipments and deliveries at each stage of the distribution system.

Procedures for Distribution of Packages to Beneficiaries

1. *Beneficiary identification process:*

- Officers responsible for each local distribution center prepare a list of potential beneficiaries within his/her jurisdiction who are eligible to participate in the program.
- Once the list is completed, it is cross-checked with a master list of beneficiaries compiled during demobilization and the subsequent cash payment process. The list is housed in a central database and includes the names of demobilized combatants and eligible dependents.
- The final recipient list is used to prepare shipments according to distribution center needs.

2. Standard distribution system:

- The operations team arrives at the distribution site at least one hour prior to the distribution starting time. Identification and product distribution stations are set-up in the following order: beneficiary identification → grains → tools → food → kitchenware → clothing → hygiene articles.
- Four staff members control the flow of recipients going in and out of the distribution site.
- At the identification station, each eligible recipient receives a “product control form” which is then presented at each distribution station for delivery of products and recording of the exact number of items received. Once the beneficiary collects all items, he/she signs and returns the product control form to program staff for record keeping purposes.

SOME LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PROJECT:

- As much as possible, ensure that the perceived quality and similarity of products distributed is maintained throughout the entire distribution period, to avoid complaints and disputes from and among recipients.
- Purchasing local products whenever possible can strengthen the local economy.
- Programs should be explained to beneficiaries’ leaders in advance, involving them and their followers as much as possible in the execution of the program.
- Beneficiaries’ assistance and active participation strengthens their own self esteem and the relationship between the executing agency and beneficiaries.
- Local authorities and community groups should be kept informed on program’s objectives and needs. In some instances they can provide assistance, services, logistic support, and human resources free of charge.

Source: Creative Associates International, Inc. (1995)

Appendix B: Information and Counseling Services in El Salvador

In El Salvador, reintegration programming for El Salvador Armed Forces (ESAF) ex-combatants and for demobilized or demobilizing National Police (PN) in the early 1990s included information and counseling services funded by USAID and coordinated by the Government of El Salvador. These services collected information on existing reintegration support activities, assessed the individual reintegration needs of beneficiaries and matched ex-combatants with relevant programs and services. For a per-beneficiary cost of less than US\$100, over 10,000 ex-combatants were assisted to find appropriate training, employment referrals, job counseling and other economic reintegration assistance.

START-UP REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROGRAM:

- Develop database of eligible beneficiaries, including name, date of birth, identification number, unit and initial preference.
- Develop estimate of the number of beneficiaries for each reintegration option, and their respective resettlement locations, ages and situations.
- Inform potential beneficiaries of the existence, components, and requirements of the program through publicity campaigns.
- Select and train personnel to provide referral and counseling services.
- Develop training manuals and support materials in consultation with military leadership.
- Document and register beneficiaries.

INFORMATION AND COUNSELING SERVICES TO ESAF Ex-COMBATANTS

Over 6,500 ESAF troops took part in individual and group counseling sessions – initially at 22 military bases

throughout El Salvador and later also at six regional centers of the Reintegration Support Program for Salvadoran Ex-Combatants in San Miguel, Usulután, San Vicente, Santa Ana, Nueva San Salvador, and San Salvador.

Design of Services:

- Active-duty ESAF personnel were trained to work as vocational guidance counselors to those in the demobilization and transition process, offering referrals, technical assistance, and counseling. Counselors received training on: counseling and interviewing techniques and methodologies; programs available to ex-combatants, and; the design of the project and mechanisms to be followed, including surveys, forms, and follow-up activities.
- A beneficiary needs assessment survey was conducted to collect information on beneficiaries' skills, aptitudes, and post-demobilization interests and geographical destination. The results of the survey helped to identify needed resources and gaps in existing programming.
- The program collected, compiled and packaged information on programs and other assistance available through over 130 governmental and non-governmental organizations that might benefit the ex-combatants in the reintegration process. Information collected included program services, numbers of ex-combatants that might be accommodated, geographical areas served, application procedures and requirements, life of program, contact person and beneficiary rights and responsibilities.

Provision of Services:

- Available programs and needs were clustered together by relevance, and workshops developed with appropriate topics and locations for ex-combatants in each cluster. Workshops were designed to orient the beneficiaries toward the options available within the program clusters, and to explain

the procedures and implications of becoming a beneficiary of the various programs. At times, representatives from various donor organizations gave presentations at the workshops, and current project beneficiaries would give their feedback on ongoing projects related to that workshop's cluster.

- Ongoing counseling was also available to beneficiaries to help them choose appropriate reintegration options. Beneficiary choices were then recorded and tracked by a central information management system.
- Evaluation and follow-up of services included meeting with beneficiaries and surveys to assess how well information and guidance had been accessed and delivered, as well as the reliability of that information.

INFORMATION AND COUNSELING SERVICES TO NATIONAL POLICE

Over 4,000 demobilized PN received counseling services and accreditation assistance in six regional centers based on the PN regional *comandancias* (headquarters). Counseling was available for any demobilized or demobilizing PN member who was interested in reintegration assistance.

Design of Services:

Program staff visited each of the 6 *comandancias* to inform them of the counseling program and explain the importance of their support and participation. They also identified a location and local conditions for the workshops, likely locations for the regional centers, and requested that each unit commander identify a representative to act as a counterpart.

Provision of Services:

Counseling services took place in two phases:

- i. Phase one: Psychological testing and presentation of information on the programs.* Program staff presented a seminar/workshop on each of the

possible reintegration options, their requirements and benefits and facilitated group discussions on program options. Aptitude tests were also conducted. The process took two full days.

ii. Phase two: Individual interview. Beneficiaries had an individual counseling session with a facilitator to select an appropriate option from among the alternatives presented. Those who opted for one of the reintegration alternatives signed an agreement of intent and were photographed in order to create a benefits identification card, which they were issued when they began their actual training. Facilitators then linked beneficiaries to their chosen program or service. It was decided that active-duty PN members could begin training if: 1) they were not engaged in security activities while receiving training, and 2) they would be departing the PN within 6 months of initiating training. Regional centers informed the ex-combatants of the features of their chosen option, i.e., schedule, location, content, etc. If a training course was recommended, registration forms were completed at the center, which then passed them on to the training institution. Packages, such as agricultural tools, were also distributed at the regional centers. Ex-combatants eligible for other benefits, e.g., credit or land, were advised by the center of the appropriate institution to access.

SOME LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PROJECT:

- Ex-combatants overwhelmingly deemed the information and counseling they received accurate and useful.
- Providing counseling linked to referral services helped ex-combatants to learn about available reintegration opportunities and to receive support in choosing the most appropriate options.
- Information and counseling services were also useful in helping ex-combatants to develop realistic expectations for their post-conflict civilian life.
- Whenever possible, begin the linkage of beneficiaries to reintegration programs while recipients are still on active duty – expecting, however, that a certain number will later change their previously identified preferences.
- Information management is key to timely program planning and resource allocation. Accurate information on the potential numbers, identities, and location of beneficiaries is particularly important.
- Involving the same personnel in collecting information about available services, conducting the needs assessment survey and participating in the reintegration workshops provided useful continuity between data gathering and direct beneficiary support.
- The regional centers in which counseling took place provided a site outside the military or police environment to discuss options for civilian life. Each center was located in an area accessible to public transportation and had a reception area, and spaces for both group and individual sessions.
- Aptitude tests used in counseling should be specifically adapted to the average education level and other characteristics of the target ex-combatant population.
- The development of a software package to process and analyze data on existing projects in the country which ex-combatants could access allowed the reintegration program to focus on activities not covered by other agencies. The results of the software analysis were also shared with other donors to encourage them to adjust their programming to address underserved needs.

Sources: Creative Associates International, Inc. (1995), Creative Associates International, Inc. (1996)

Appendix C: Setting up a Vocational Training Program for Ex-Combatants

The Occupational Skills Development program in Mozambique was established in 1994 to assist demobilized soldiers to find a job or become self-employed. Through the program, interested ex-combatants who could meet education and literacy prerequisites were eligible for vocational training in various marketable skills, alongside basic business training and tool kits. Training made use of 45 existing government-run and 20 non-governmental (both private-sector and NGO-run) training institutions across the country. The program was funded by Sweden, Netherlands and Italy, and implemented by the NGO CORE and the Government of Mozambique. The training program consisted of three components:

I. Vocational skills development

- A package of courses and programs tailored to demobilized soldiers
- Three-six month, employment-oriented skills training courses in fields including plumbing, masonry, electricity, and carpentry
- Courses announced/displayed at local reintegration program offices
- Labor market studies used to generate regionally-appropriate offerings
- Monthly stipends for trainees to cover food and transport costs and lodging provided while undergoing training

II. Business skills training

- Vocational skills courses complemented by a 5-day basic business course
- Follow-up counseling was provided to ex-combatants identified as potential

entrepreneurs. These ex-combatants also received assistance in preparing business plans to submit to potential creditors.

- Two levels of business training available, depending on ex-combatant's literacy level

III. Tool Kits

- Fifteen different tool kits made available for purchase at subsidized prices
- Accessible to vocational training graduates and recent demobilized with demonstrating sufficient vocational skills

SOME LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PROJECT:

- Planning and preparation of vocational training support for ex-combatants takes at least 6 months and will depend on existing information/data on training institutions, local labor markets, and ex-combatant profiles (skills, education, training, settlement destinations, training preferences).
- A range of preparatory tasks should be undertaken before developing the vocational training component of reintegration programming:
 - i. Develop a database of demobilized ex-combatants
 - ii. Conduct a market analysis to ascertain demand for skills and services in each region or province
 - iii. Prepare a list of courses to be provided, reflecting ex-combatant preferences, assessed market needs, selection criteria and institutional capacity. Project planners should use ex-combatant registration questionnaires to assess the preferred vocations for training.
 - iv. Review capacities and needs of available training institutions. Use in-person visits to evaluate the facilities and quality of staff.
 - v. Issue contracts to training providers. If possible, use existing organizations and

- institutions able to provide both business and vocational skills
- vi. Establish criteria for basic tool and equipment kits. Prepare and technically assess kit samples and begin procurement process for approved kits.
 - vii. Coordinate with other organizations to disseminate information on training programs and to pre-screen candidates
 - viii. Establish training plans with beneficiaries

Source: Creative Associates International, Inc. (1995)

Appendix D: The Development Brigade Experience in Namibia

In the early 1990s, the Government of Namibia initiated a program to engage 16,000 ex-combatants in public works through 'development brigades'. The program was designed to respond to demobilized soldiers' high levels of unemployment and lack of practical skills for self-employment. Ex-combatants had the option to report to one of twelve development brigade sites established at former military bases throughout the country to receive training and employment. The brigades emphasized skill development through practical experience in such fields as agriculture, construction and mining, with little classroom/theoretical training. Participants were enrolled in the brigades as individuals, unaccompanied by their families, and during their several-month stay, each received approximately US\$20/month as well as room and board.

Unfortunately, the Development Brigade program was plagued by several difficulties – which resulted in it having little positive impact on the reintegration of its beneficiaries. These negative experiences are instructive in guiding future works programs for ex-combatants. Three of the main problems of the key program were:

1. Inadequate planning and resources

The rush to put the program in place to reduce disturbances by frustrated ex-combatants resulted in

the adoption of an unrealistic start date for the brigades which allowed for only five months of preparation time. This short launch time constrained planning and resource mobilization, which in turn limited investment in staff, equipment, buildings and management structures.

Some of the problems which resulted from these constraints included:

- No systematic decision-making on the location of brigade sites
- No renovation to convert selected military bases into training centers and provide them with necessary basic services or equipment
- Curriculum and techniques for training were only partially developed
- Inadequate numbers of skilled trainers and lack of availability of necessary training equipment made training almost entirely classroom-based, rather than hands-on as intended
- No matching of skills training to national skill requirements
- Failure to acknowledge special requirements of female Brigade members
- Little research done on the relevance of proposed activities to local needs and resources

2. Inadequate job creation opportunities for brigades

Inadequate strategic planning and choice of training subjects constrained the effectiveness of the program in identifying viable sectors/projects where brigade members could be productively deployed. With shortages of qualified staff and training equipment, the brigades found little market for their work and were rarely able to generate contracts from the commercial sector. Furthermore, the Development Brigade program fell under the department of the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation during its first two years. This limited the brigades' job creation potential, as they were thus prevented engaging in pure commercial activities for profit. Finally, while intended

to assist trainees with self-employment or starting their own businesses, the project never launched this support. Few brigade members thus showed an interest in self-initiated projects, and those who did were given no relevant guidance.

3. Potential for Disturbances and Instability

Boredom and unrest had serious consequences in the brigade sites. Disturbances occurred at nearly every Brigade center in 1992, including an attempted detention of the Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation and of the Brigade director. Brigade participants were also involved in numerous demonstrations and marches, protesting delays in monthly payments, lack of training, and the government's inability to provide them with jobs and/or general support. The absence of family orientation in the Development Brigades contributed to this unrest.

SOME LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PROJECT:

- The model of large works brigades is flawed. Re-assembling large numbers of (mostly male) ex-fighters in one place is difficult and risky, posing a security threat when frustrations are high. Such brigades can also postpone reintegration to civilian life by prolonging existence within proto-military settlements that can be difficult to disperse later. Furthermore, new centers established for the purpose of training ex-combatants are costly to equip and maintain, yet less likely than existing institutes to provide effective training. Focus should thus be placed on promoting profitable, small-group enterprises or self-employment.
- The Development Brigades often focused on specialized, capital-intensive work (such as water-drilling) which is unpredictable and cannot absorb large numbers of workers. More appropriate for meeting ex-combatants' needs for low-skilled regular employment are labor-intensive projects such as pipe-laying and construction which are more in demand, may benefit the overall community, and are more likely to yield individual job placements

at the local level. Such skills and work experience better prepare ex-combatants for self-sufficiency.

- Many demobilized soldiers had an attitude that the government owed them and would take care of them, which inhibited them from taking the initiative to gain skills and employment. The original structure of the Development Brigade allowed this attitude to perpetuate. Programming for ex-combatants should instead clearly communicate program objectives (and limitations), adhere to planned assistance time frames, assist with family/community integration rather than promoting ex-combatant isolation, and limit disincentives (such as the continued payment of living allowances for brigade members) which discourage active steps towards economic reintegration.

Source: Creative Associates International, Inc. (1995)

Appendix E: National Leadership of the Demobilization and Reintegration Program in Ethiopia

After 29 years of civil strife and prolonged guerrilla warfare, the Ethiopian Popular Revolutionary Democratic Front assumed power in 1991 and established the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE). Within three weeks of taking power, the TGE established the Commission for the Rehabilitation of Former Members of the Army and Disabled War Veterans. Over the next several years, the Commission successfully managed one of the largest demobilization and reintegration processes in Africa – including over 400,000 defeated soldiers – despite a national context of widespread poverty and a decimated infrastructure.

SOME LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PROJECT:

According to the Commission, many of its successes were due to the leadership of the government, and to the institutional and organizational culture which it created – three key elements of which were:

1. Decentralization and Active Involvement of Local Level Structures

- In addition to a central body, the Commission was also composed of seven regional offices and 36 branch offices which were responsible for organization, coordination and, often, also for delivery of demobilization and reintegration activities in the field.
- Local committees, which included many ex-combatants, were established to support the branch offices in implementation, especially of the rural reintegration program.
- Community participation in decisions related to the delivery of program assistance was encouraged by the Commission, and thought to contribute to ex-combatants' acceptance of their benefits. Wide-ranging discussions were also held with communities in areas where ex-combatants would return, to ensure their concerns were taken into account during program planning.

2. Linking of Local and Central Government Actors and Other Stakeholders

- The Commission's institutional structure included a network of committees which linked national and local stakeholders. Incorporating government bureaucrats, NGOs, community representatives, and ex-combatants, these committees fostered communication and coordination among different actors and a sense of shared responsibility for program success.
- The Commission encouraged active participation in these representative

committees and used government personnel from the central to the village level to encourage communities to participate in the committees.

- An advisory council to assist the Commission was also established, which included as members: the Commissioner for Relief and Rehabilitation, Vice Ministers of nine relevant ministries, and representatives of other agencies involved in demobilization and reintegration issues.

3. Political Will and Commitment

- From the start, the TGE viewed demobilization and reintegration as two phases within the overall goal of transition to peace. The result was coherence in the planning and execution of both phases.
- Political will from the highest levels of government translated into the dedication of sufficient resources to the program. It also encouraged the inclusion of mechanisms for cross-sectoral government participation and for coordination at all levels. The TGE's assessment that successful reintegration required ex-combatant self-sufficiency, for example, led to its devising of a national strategy of land distribution and agricultural support for all rural returnees.
- The full and rapid government commitment to demobilization and reintegration also enabled government structures to be utilized – and adapted if necessary – to implement reintegration strategies, rather than creating temporary, parallel structures, with all the attendant difficulties of such a model.

Source: Creative Associates International, Inc. (1995)

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