

Reintegration Phase of DDR Processes
Expert meeting report

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INTRODUCTION

1. Goals of the meeting

A limited selection of experts from international research institutes had been invited for the expert meeting. All invitees had recently been or were at the time involved in research projects on the R-phase of DDR processes. The object of the meeting was to: 1) provide the opportunity for researchers to present their (provisional results), methods and findings; 2) share information and experiences on the topic; 3) identify areas for future research.

2. Background

The expert meeting aimed to concentrate on the reintegration of demobilized and disarmed ex-combatants, with a particular focus on how reintegration programmes relate to socio-economic reconstruction efforts in post-conflict situations. DDR programs generally aim to address the post-conflict security challenge arising from combatants left without livelihoods during the critical transition period from conflict to development. Within this context, one of the goals of DDR processes is to contribute to economic security by providing viable economic alternatives for ex-combatants to prevent their return (or resort) to violence.

Experience over the years has indicated that (long term) integration of demobilized combatants is still a challenging task. Especially returning to a livelihood within civil society has proven to be problematic, an issue strongly related to the socio-economic characteristics of a post-conflict society. The reintegration phase (R-phase) of DDR programs can at times even be more related to the socio-economic and structural development components of reconstruction than security related issues. Consequently, the R-phase of DDR processes also requires the involvement of actors other than those participating in the demobilization and disarmament (DD) phases.

The report consists of: 1) a broad overview of issues brought up during the presentations and discussions by the various experts, rearranged by topic; 2) an overview of the most relevant policy recommendations and suggestions for further research.

1. OVERVIEW

1.1. The R-phase and longer term economic development

Reintegration is a long term process strongly related to socio-economic development. However, in order to increase the impact and the effectiveness of DDR processes, the R-phase in particular, it is essential to also recognize and identify the limitations and boundaries of such processes. DDR is aimed at the stabilization and creation of an environment in which longer term (economic) development is made possible. DDR is, however, not aimed at fostering longer term development itself.

In the past the dividing line between reinsertion and reintegration has not always been clear. Reintegration has commonly been used to cover *all* activities after demobilization, but ex-combatants have in the past primarily received reinsertion benefits. Given the political and security objectives of DDR, it might make more sense to redefine and limit the R-phase of DDR as reinsertion and view this phase as a bridge between demobilization and longer term reintegration.¹ The benefit of this approach is that it will draw a line between the individual's status as an ex-combatant and as a civilian. The UN definition also suggests that longer term reintegration is not a part of DDR processes. Yet, it remains essential to identify ways in which longer term reintegration assistance can be used to support the reintegration of former combatants and their dependants into civilian life without privileging them compared to other war affected populations. In order to encourage sustainability, reintegration programmes should thus be planned and implemented along with other post-conflict reconstruction programmes, such as wider recovery and economic development programmes.

Related is the observation that the R-phase significantly differs from the DD phases, as it predominantly socio-economic in character. This requires the process to be handled differently, by different people and in a different framework. During the conference it was even suggested to break down the different components of DDR processes, even though they should be linked to each other. It was suggested that even though the DD and the R-phase need to be linked, they should not necessarily be integrated within one programme.

¹ Nicole Ball and Luc van der Goor, "Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Mapping issues, Dilemmas and Guiding Principles", *Clingendael Netherlands Institute for International Relations, Conflict Research Unit*, August 2006, at p.3. Both experts were not present at the meeting, but their research and suggestions closely relate to the topics discussed during the expert meeting.

Further research is needed on how to design the transition between the R-phase and longer term socio-economic development. Studies may want to include the mapping of various actors involved in both the DD- phase and the R-phase.

1.2. Context analysis

Most experts emphasized the policy vs. practice dichotomy. This was typically mentioned in relation to the holistic and integrated approach as set out in UN documents and the difficulties to implement such an approach on the ground.

Context analyses were found crucial in order to design the most suitable DDR processes and were considered to be part of the solution for the gap between policy and practice. Local labour-, market- and impact assessments were, for instance, found crucial in order to deal more adequately with the socio-economic consequences of the reintegration and increase the success rate and sustainability of reintegration processes. Little attention is presently paid to the implications of reintegration for the role of the market economy and the efforts of state building.

Such context analyses should recognize the need to consider the reintegration of ex-combatants from two perspectives. Firstly, how can ex-combatants best be integrated into society and secondly, when attempts are made at comprehensive reintegration of ex-combatants, what are the effects of this process to the economy, the state and the market. Such impact assessments are expected to have consequences for policy and program design from a pro-poor angle, i.e. by ensuring that long term development prospects are not damaged by benefiting one group over the others early in the process.

Context analyses will support DDR programmes to be more flexible and tailored to a specific country or region. Various research projects have identified the need for a more flexible approach as opposed to the current tendency to rely on blue print approaches, as formulated in the UN IDDRS guidelines. Experience with the implementation of programmes has shown that the 3D approach may not always be most desirable.

Also, undertaking context analysis is not only fundamental to designing DDR programmes that are tailored to a specific country, but through undertaking a conflict analysis- a 'conflict sensitive' approach to DDR programmes can be developed. Such an approach ensures that the DDR programme has a positive impact upon peace and conflict dynamics as opposed to a negative impact (i.e. fuelling the drivers of conflict dynamics). This is likely to be the case if a conflict analysis is not undertaken and DDR related interventions are not sensitive to and based on a sound analysis of conflict drivers.

This also relates to the identified need for different types of approaches within one programme, depending on the local dynamics. Local realities both on the ground and on higher political and governmental levels are essential for the success of DDR processes, including the R-phase. Even though local governments may lack the capacity to implement DDR programmes, they should be closely involved in conducting such analyses. Regional dynamics should also be taken into account.

Future research needs to focus on to how make context analyses an integral part of DDR processes. The balance between blue print approaches and flexibility is thereby essential. Due to the significant differences between the DD-phase and the R-phase, there is also a need for research to look into the development of context analyses specifically related to the R-phase, such as local labour-, market-, impact- and participatory needs assessments.

1.3. Strategic planning

Research has indicated that there is a serious lack of (longer term) strategic planning. Current issues are usually dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis, which is particularly relevant for the R-phase of DDR processes. The limited horizon of the international community usually means that resources are often used for the demilitarization and demobilization phases, leaving limited resources for the R-phase of the process. The logistical costs and the set up of resettlement centres take up a relatively large part of the funding, leaving a major gap in the planning between the demobilization and reintegration phase.

Diversity of funding sources can be a means to prevent the gap between DD-phase on the one hand and the R-phase on the other hand. Research has indicated that the DD phase is easier to fund, plan and implement in comparison with the R-phase. DD programmes usually show quick results, whereas the reintegration phase often depends on voluntary contributions and on expertise and conditions that are not always present in a timely manner in post-conflict environments. The gap in this process can be minimized if the transition between the R-phase and long term reintegration programmes are properly planned, in close coordination with donors, and adequately resourced from the outset.

Funding agencies, even when primarily involved in the reintegration phase of the process, therefore need to participate in the planning and design of the DDR programme at the earliest stage so as to ensure that the required resources are in place in a timely manner. This is especially true considering that the key aspects of reintegration programmes often need to be established during the demobilization phase.²

² The example of the DRC was brought up, were the DDR process was slow, mainly as it consisted of three separate structures: 1) planning; 2) financing (often WB); 3) implementation.

Planning for sustainable reintegration should thus start as early as possible. Future research is required on how DDR provisions in peace agreements can be used to provide space for the development of longer term strategies that could prevent the re-recruitment of disarmed combatants and allow for a transition to longer term socio-economic development. Yet, it should be noted that including provisions for DDR in peace agreements can have a positive impact in some contexts but not others. It should thus be decided on a case-by-case basis whether to include DDR provisions in peace agreements or not.³

1.4. Job creation

There is a close link between the success of the R-phase and the availability of jobs. The main aim of reintegration processes is that ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income, which is evidentially hampered when there are no jobs available. Job creation is therefore a crucial aspect, as unemployment can be an incentive for ex-combatants to return to war. In a deconstructed war economy the creation of jobs is, however, difficult because businesses have been destroyed during the conflict.

The international community is predominantly involved in the early phases of post-conflict reconstruction processes. As donors are often driven by the need to show results, large reconstruction processes are usually outsourced to international companies rather than executed by the local private sector. However, it is recommendable to involve the local private sector in reconstruction projects, as it will provide job opportunities for local workers and thereby support the reintegration of ex-combatants. Local businesses cannot relocate during the conflict and are members of the community. They therefore have an interest in a stable environment and peace efforts. Involvement of the local private sector is also likely to yield more sustainable results, due to this vested interest in building up a local economy and a local market. Adequate training thereby increases the chances of successful reintegration and encourages sustainable development of the local private sector. Yet, mistrust and fear of ex-combatants continue to reduce incentives for local entrepreneurs to hire ex-combatants.

International actors usually aim to convince local entrepreneurs of their interest in a stable environment and reintegration by focusing on the benefits of an improved business climate. This has, however, proven to be a rather Western and ineffective approach. It was recommended to concentrate on the profit side instead, by explaining that receiving trainees will, for instance, involve lower costs necessary for a good survival strategy in post-conflict societies.

³ It was noted that in Sudan, for instance, the challenges associated with the implementation of the DDR programme, was largely due to the fact that the DDR programme is framed within and directed by a fragile peace agreement, which both sides have been failing to implement.

Apart from involvement of the local private sector, it was suggested to further look into the role of the international private sector in reconstruction processes, for example in terms of the role of public-private partnerships (PPP's). Currently, PPP's are only used informally, but have thus far not been linked to formal employment policies.

1.5. Community based integration

Community based reintegration has emerged as a concept and model which implies that the community, rather than the individual, is the primary unit for consideration and suggests a bottom up approach.⁴ It thereby embodies the principles of local ownership, participatory methodologies and interventions based upon context specific needs. Sufficient time and adequate resources are thereby needed in order to prepare the community for the reintegration of ex-combatants.

Community based reintegration is closely related to the debate on who should be the beneficiaries of the R-phase of DDR processes. By excluding certain groups from reintegration programmes, inequality is enhanced and has raised questions regarding situations in which ex-combatants received more support than other war affected populations. Taking a community perspective is therefore relevant because it does not solely address the small percentage of ex-combatants within a society.

Community structures are not only useful in terms of enforcement mechanisms, but also local command structures can be supportive for DDR. Currently, DDR processes are aimed at disrupting or breaking down (local) command structures, in accordance with the IDDRS guidelines. Practice has shown, however, that it may be recommendable to maintain such structures, as they can be particularly useful for the implementation of DDR programmes, including the R-phase. People who otherwise would be leaders of small enterprises are often in middle level command. The command structures can function as information structures or be used to gain support for the programme. Such practical strategic issues should thus be taken into account, but the way programmes are now planned make it difficult to incorporate such issues.

1.6. The Role of NGOs

NGOs used to be rather reluctant to be involved in DDR, as it was perceived to be primarily a military process. However, NGOs are now increasingly involved with local governments and the military, often in order to influence the government's involvement in DDR. National NGOs are thereby mostly concerned with the soft side of DDR, including the R-phase.

⁴ Community safety and security are closely related concepts, which can both be an end goal as well as a programmatic approach and methodology, conferring a particular type of intervention primarily owned, developed and (to varying degrees) implemented by the community and at the level of the community.

NGOs are particularly involved in the *implementation* of the R-phase of DDR, as cost-benefit analyses show that they can do so more cost effectively than other institutions and organizations. Also, local governments usually depend on NGOs for the implementation due to their lack of capacity. Research has indicated that NGOs are often involved in activities which are not officially part of DDR programmes, but indirectly support such efforts (such as micro credit programmes, education, vaccination etc). NGOs are hardly involved in the design of DDR processes, as this is mainly done at a donor level, i.e. the UN and the World Bank.

Research on the involvement of NGOs in the R-phase has also indicated that documents often lack a critical view and contain rarely real analyses of the programmes. Most documents primarily remain technical in their approaches. Further research is needed to incorporate lessons learned and evaluation in the DDR programmes and to create effective and formalized feedback mechanisms. There seems to be a specific need to improve the integration of lessons learned into practice. Evaluations should involve the experiences of local communities.

1.7. Transitional Justice

The objective of DDR is usually to help provide stability and to prevent ex-combatants from returning to war. The object of transitional justice is to overcome the legacy of crime and impunity after a war. Both are important for the establishment of sustainable peace, but experience has shown that it is a challenge to combine these goals, especially in the short term. In some cases, the quest of stability leads to a complete neglect of the need to prosecute war crimes, to establish the truth and to reform institutions in such a way that the injustices committed during the war are not repeated. In other cases, the wish to avoid impunity has obstructed the need for DDR and other stabilization measures. Where DDR programmes are designed in isolation from transitional justice measures this can lead to unfair results where more benefits are provided to ex-combatants than to victims. Transitional justice is thus an important aspect of a community approach and particularly relevant in relation to the R-phase of DDR processes. Essential issues for reintegration, such as trust and reconciliation, are considerably harder to achieve without dealing with severe crimes committed during war time. Especially the employment of ex-combatants and longer term reintegration largely depends on trust and reconciliation.

Research would thus be welcome on how to link or perhaps include transitional justice processes into DDR programmes, the R-phase in particular.

2. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

2.1. The R-phase of DDR processes requires context analyses

Context analysis is crucial in order to design suitable DDR processes and are considered part of the solution for the gap between policy and practice. Such analyses should not only deal with questions on how ex-combatants can best be integrated into society, but also on the effects of the reintegration process to the economy, the state and the market. Context analyses are supportive for programmes which require different approaches within one DDR process.

As opposed to the DD-phases, the R-phase has mainly a socio-economic character. It takes place within a different framework and involves different actors. Future research is thus recommended on the integration of context analyses into DDR programmes and the development of analyses and impact assessments specifically related to the R-phase. The latter could focus on, for instance, local labour-, market- and general economic impact assessments or participatory needs assessments. Studies should thereby also take into account regional dynamics and the question of how to design the R-phase for situations where fighting still continues.

2.2. Strategic planning of the R-phase of DDR needs to take place as early in the process as possible

The current lack of strategic planning has proven to specifically affect the R-phase of DDR processes. Although there is a temptation to view DDR as a linear process, the scale and complexity of reintegration, as well as the need to ensure that this is possible in terms of both resources and structures to run and manage programmes, means that planning for reintegration must take place from the very outset.

Future research is required on how such planning processes can be incorporated in DDR provisions in peace agreements. Studies thereby need to deal with the question on how to provide space for the development of longer term strategies in peace agreements.

Related to this quest for longer term strategies is the need for studies and policy development on how to improve the transition between the R-phase and longer term development, especially from a pro-poor perspective. In general there is a specific need for a clear definition of what DDR should incorporate and the boundaries of the expected outcomes. Studies may thereby want to include the mapping of the various actors involved in both the DD and the R-phase.

2.3. Job creation is essential for the success of the R-phase

The success and sustainability of the reintegration of ex-combatants is closely related to the availability of jobs, as the main aim of reintegration processes is that ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. The involvement of the local private sector in large reconstruction programmes and community based approaches of DDR processes enhances job creation for ex-combatants.

Future research should further look into the role of the international private sector in reconstruction processes, for instance in terms of the role public-private partnerships (PPP's). Studies may want to deal with questions such as how to better link PPP's with formal employment policies.

2.4. Running programmes should be better monitored and evaluated

Current evaluation documents of DDR processes have proven to be rather technical in nature, they lack a critical view of the processes and contain rarely real analyses of the programmes. Success should be measured in terms of the quality and sustainability of reintegration rather than the number of reintegrated individuals.

Further research is needed to incorporate lessons learned and evaluation in the DDR programmes and to create effective and formalized feedback mechanisms. Greater consultation with community members regarding the economic and social needs, should be taken into account in order to avoid situations whereby former combatants are reintegrated into unsustainable or inappropriate models. There seems to be a specific need to integrate the lessons learned into practice, including the R-phase.

2.5. Transitional justice should be taken into account in reintegration processes

The goals of transitional justice and DDR processes are not always easily compatible. Yet, trust and reconciliation have proven to be particularly relevant for the employment of ex-combatants and longer term reintegration. Transitional justice thus needs to be taken into account in order to increase the success and sustainability of reintegration processes.

There is a quest for future research on how to link and integrate transitional justice programmes with the R-phase of DDR processes.